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# Gustav Mahler and Psychoanalysis

by

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## PART I

Donald Mitchell's book "Gustav Mahler, The Early Years",\* is of great interest, not only because Mahler sought Freud's help in the crisis of his life, but because musicologists are turning more and more to Psychoanalysis to explain behaviour patterns in the subjects of their special study.

It is therefore undoubtedly appropriate that the 'Imago Group London', specialising as it does in the applications of psychoanalysis to human activities, should from time to time concern itself with work by experts in their own field, who have employed or drawn attention to psychoanalytical techniques.

"Gustav Mahler, The Early Years" is a very clear-headed biography, which not only presents Mahler's character and psychology as far as his contemporaries, and indeed Freud himself could observe them, but produces much material on the basis of which an attempt can be made to observe Mahler, not only in terms of the Freudian techniques of 1910, but also in terms of the more modern techniques not as yet absorbed by the culture.

The essential dates of Mahler's life are as follows; he was born in July 1860, married in March 1902, consulted Freud in August 1910, and died in May 1911, though the onset of his last illness dated from late February of that year.

On the subject of his approaching marriage, his wife Alma Mahler (1) quotes him as saying, "If only you had had a love affair or were a widow it would be alright", and com-

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\*Rockliff Press

1. Gustav Mahler, 'Memories and Letters' by Alma Mahler, p. 23 (John Murray)

menting on this she says, "These outbursts were painful to me. Up to now my virginity had always seemed a glory".

This was the foreshadowing of the crisis of Mahler's life in the summer of 1910. It was actuated by a young painter in love with his wife, and disclosed to him the real state of his marriage which he had hidden from himself for years. The painter was ignored by Mahler's wife but nevertheless used to write her love letters, and actually addressed one to Mahler himself, either by mistake, or else 'by mistake on purpose', to bring matters to a head.

On the scene which followed Alma Mahler (2) says, "And now - at last - I was able to tell him all. I told him I had longed for his love year after year, and that he, in his fanatical concentration on his own life had simply overlooked me. As I spoke, he felt for the first time that something is owed to the person with whom one's life has once been linked. He suddenly felt a sense of guilt."

Days later Mahler brought the painter to the house, and said that his wife must choose between them, but Alma Mahler writes, "I could never have imagined life without him, even though the feeling that my life was running to waste had often filled me with despair." She continues, "He, on the other hand was churned to the very bottom" . . . . "He realised that he had lived the life of a neurotic and suddenly decided to consult Sigmund Freud."

She reports Freud as saying to him, "I know your wife. She loved her father and she can only choose and love a man of his sort. Your age of which you are so much afraid is precisely what attracts her. You need not be anxious. You loved your mother, and you look for her in every woman. She was careworn and ailing, and unconsciously you wish your wife to be the same".

She goes on, "He was right in both cases, Gustav Mahler's mother was called Marie. His first impulse was to change my name to Marie in spite of the difficulty he had in pronouncing "r". And when he got to know me better

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2. Op. cit., pp. 145, 146, 147



he wanted my face to be more 'stricken', his very word". . . .  
"I too always looked for a small slight man, who had wisdom and spiritual superiority since this was what I had known and loved in my father. Freud's diagnosis composed Mahler's mind though he refused to acknowledge his fixation on his mother".

Another account of this meeting is in Ernest Jones (3) biography of Freud which confirms Alma Mahler's account but adds two details of interest. The first is that 'Maler' (4) means 'painter' in German and that Alma Mahler was the daughter of the famous painter Schindler whose status is in the Stadtpark in Vienna; the second, quoted from Ernest Jones runs as follows:

"In the course of the talk Mahler suddenly said that he now understood why his music had always been prevented from achieving the highest rank, through the noblest passages, those inspired by the most profound emotions being spoiled by the intrusion of some commonplace melody. His father, apparently a brutal person, treated his wife very badly, and when Mahler was a young boy there was a specially painful scene between them. It became quite unbearable to the boy, who rushed away from the house. At that moment however, a hurdy-gurdy in the street was grinding out the popular Viennese air, "O Du liebe Augustin". In Mahler's opinion the conjunction of high tragedy and light amusement was from then on inextricably fixed in his mind, and the one mood inevitably brought the other with it."

Now in 1910 this may well have been all that psychoanalysis could say in the matter, and had Mahler continued his analysis it would have been conducted on the lines of mother-fixation, father-hostility, and castration-complex. But this was nearly 50 years ago, nor has psychoanalysis stood still during the period.

In a book published late in 1958 entitled "Psychoanalysis

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3. 'The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud' by Ernest Jones, Vol. 2 (Basic Books Inc. N.Y.)

4. Pronounced Mahler.

and Contemporary Thought" (5) Dr. D. W. Winnicott one of seven authors writes, "It should be noted that whereas the earlier work of psychoanalysts dwelt on the conflict between love and hate, especially in the three-body or triangular situation, Melanie Klein more especially has developed the idea of conflict in the simple two-body relationship of the infant to the mother, conflict arising out of the destructive ideas that accompany the love impulse. Naturally, the date of the original version of this stage in an individual's development is earlier than the date of the Oedipus Complex. The accent changes. In previous work the accent was on the satisfaction that the infant obtained from instinctual experience. Now the accent shifts on to the aim, as it gradually appears. When Mrs. Klein says that the infant aims at breaking ruthlessly through into the mother to take out of her everything that is felt there to be good, she is not of course denying the simple fact that instinctual experiences yield satisfaction. . . . Klein has developed the idea, however, that the primitive love impulse has an aggressive aim; being ruthless, it carries with it a variable quantity of destructive ideas unaffected by 'concern'!" Dr. Winnicott then goes on to describe the early development of concern or guilt in the tiny infant.

Quite obviously then, if we are to probe further into Mahler's psychology, it will not be solely in terms of his Oedipus complex, the accent must be shifted to the two-body relationship with his mother which will inevitably contribute to the basis of his true Oedipus Orientation.

Of Mahler's qualities as a composer Edward Perry writes, "A Mahler score remains crystal clear in the densest climax, and a glance at a page of full score reveals the utmost mastery of instrumental technique. There is no doubt that he was one of the greatest and most sensitive orchestrators of all time, with an ability to extract the most delicate and lovely sounds from his orchestra. This is one reason why his music

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5. *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought* (Hogarth Press) Ch. I. p. 23.

is always recognisable from a hearing of the smallest fragment''. (Note to 6th Symphony Urania Records)

Yet what is said here about Mahler is not so important as what is left unsaid. If Brahms were the subject of discussion, hardly anybody would deny the intrinsic 'worth' of his music, though many would miss in Brahms just those qualities described in the previous paragraph which Mahler possessed. Similarly a certain fundamental 'quality', as distinct from the ability at will to create new and beautiful sounds on the orchestra would be missed by many in Mahler's music, that is relative to the music of Brahms, his senior contemporary. This is not to say that Mahler's music has no 'worth', indeed it has, yet we have to ask ourselves why with so much facility he yet fails to convince finally and irrevocably like Brahms, whose technique though impeccable is frequently stodgy and puritan.

(6) Theodor Reik has quoted a letter he had from Freud about Mahler which invites enquiry: the relevant material runs, "I analysed Mahler for an afternoon. . . . in Leyden . . . . . In highly interesting expeditions through his life history, we discovered his personal conditions for love, especially his Holy Mary complex. I had plenty of opportunity to admire the capability for psychological understanding of this man of genius. No light fell at the time on the symptomatic facade of his obsessional neurosis. It was as if you would dig a single shaft through a mysterious building".

In connection with the last sentence Freud may have thought that the case looked far too clear cut for comfort, and though he would take risks for theory, quite obviously he could not put on record his speculations about cases, especially cases of famous men.

However, Theodor Reik (7), himself of Freud's circle, published his highly interesting conclusions some 43 years later though still on the same strict triangular pattern. Tak-

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6. 'The Haunting Melody' by Theodor Reik p. 343 (Farrar Straus and Young, N. Y.)

7. Op. cit., p. 344 by Theodor Reik

ing Mahler's vast Eighth Symphony as his example he writes, "For the context into which we put this analytic fragment of the composer's biography it is important that here the last and most important psychological link between the *Veni Creator Spiritus* and the idea of the last Faust Scene becomes recognisable. Here emerges from the darkness the secret substructure of the stilted arch which bridges the passionate artistic zeal with the sublime concept of the Eternal Feminine. At the bottom of that proud and lofty building we recognise the contours of a familiar emotional constellation: the invocation of the Holy Spirit, that pleading for creative power, finds its answer and reward in the appearance of the *Mater Gloriosa* of the untouchable mother-image. The zeal for highest achievement is followed by the redemption, by the grace of the Holy Virgin. In the storm to the heights of the Divine Father, that passionate request is met with a response of the mother in her most idealized shape. Freud realised that secret emotional connection between Mahler's striving for the highest achievement, and his 'Holy Mary Complex', the infantile pattern behind the philosophical facade of the 51 years old artist". Reik concludes by saying that Mahler worked far too hard in his search for the Absolute and did not really allow himself to live.

Now, all this is an improvement in the sense that the 'Feminine' and the 'Creative' are identified, but Reik's whole concept is still in terms of mother-object. Identification with the mother is scarcely hinted at, nor are the obsessional symptoms very clearly defined in relation to what they are supposed to be masking, and the very vagueness of the writing suggests that he is having great difficulty in trying to explain everything in terms of the Oedipus Complex, which is hardly surprising when we reflect that so much of its character is determined by the simple two body relationship of the infant to the mother, necessarily of earlier origin.

Why for instance did Mahler forbid his wife to compose, and make it a condition of his marriage that she give it up, even though she was an accomplished musician and had written more than 100 songs? Further, can Mahler's doubts

concerning inspiration really be part of the triangular Oedipus situation especially in view of his astonishing technical fluency which in some respects suggests a good father identification?

Convincing evidence that most of the hostility did in fact lie elsewhere is to hand. (8) Donald Mitchell gives an account in his book of an earlier crisis in Mahler's adult life, built around his cantata 'Das klagende Lied', which he entered when still a student for the Beethoven prize for composition at the Vienna Conservatoire in December 1881.

He had studied there 6 years but did not win the prize, though it is of some interest that Brahms was on the panel. The fairy tale on which Mahler based his text is by Ludwig Bechstein. It bears the same name, but significant changes and substitutions have been made by Mahler. In this connection Donald Mitchell has provided a challenging note on his own text, but first the text. "It must be that the roots of Mahler's variations of Bechstein's story lay in his own psychological make up, that the changed relationships were conditioned by emotional attitudes of Mahler's towards members of his family". And now the note. "the elucidation of this claim requires specialist knowledge and treatment. I much hope that a musician with the necessary psychological qualifications will take the point up." (9)

Let us then take up the challenge, find out the nature of these changes and discuss their significance. Donald Mitchell writes, "Since there are not unimportant variations between Bechstein's and Mahler's versions it will be wise if we first acquaint ourselves with Mahler's story. . . The action of the Cantata (in its original version of three parts) runs as follows. A proud Queen declares that whosoever shall find a certain red flower growing in the forest shall win her hand. Two brothers go in search of the flower, the younger of a sweet disposition, the elder evil in character. The younger brother finds the flower, sticks it in his hat and stretches out

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8. Gustav Mahler 'The Early Years' by Donald Mitchell p. 142 (Rockcliff Press)

9. Text p. 144. Note: p. 258 op. cit.

to rest. He is discovered asleep by his elder brother who, jealous of his success, strikes him dead with a sword, steals the flower, and claims the Queen as his bride. The younger brother lies buried under leaves and blossoms beneath a willow tree".

"Part II introduces the Minstrel, who picks up a gleaming white bone, fashions it into a flute and plays upon it - when he is astonished to hear the flute pour forth its tale of murder, 'Sorrow and Woe'. The minstrel ventures forth to seek out the King and his bride".

"Part III brings us to the Castle. It is the Queen's wedding day and a feast is in progress. The minstrel enters the castle hall and plays his flute: it repeats once more the story of the murder. The guilty king leaps to his feet, seizes the flute and scornfully places it to his lips: the bone sings again its sorry tale of fratricide. The Queen collapses to the ground, the guests flee, and the castle walls begin to crumble".

"In Ludwig Bechstein's fairy tale, the contenders for the flower are not brothers, but brother and sister the prize is not marriage, but succession to the Queen's throne. The Princess, the firstborn finds the flower and lies down to sleep, whereupon she is murdered by her jealous brother. In later years a peasant boy picks up a bone and makes a flute from it: he is startled when a child's voice issues forth and tells the manner of the sister's death".

"A knight takes possession of the flute, and appears at the castle where the guilty brother is King and his mother still mourns her lost daughter. It is to the old Queen alone that the flute reveals the terrible truth. She then takes the instrument and herself plays it to her son before a festive assembly. in the Castle Hall. The story ends on this note of chilling catastrophe, in which the mother is the final instrument of her son's doom".

The substitutions are vital. If Mahler were regressing, that is, if he were in retreat from the Oedipus Complex, he would hardly substitute a brother rivalry with marriage as the prize, for a brother-sister rivalry with the prize as the Queen's throne, in fantasy 'becoming Queen'; the exact op-



posite would be likely. And the suppression of the brother-sister rivalry, and indeed of all real female activity in the story is remarkable, particularly if we note that in Mahler's version the child's voice issuing from the complaining flute is also suppressed.

The pattern is reinforced when we see that in Bechstein's version the child flute reveals the terrible truth to the Queen who then destroys her own son, while in the Mahler version it is the King who scornfully seizes the flute and tells a tale of fratricide.

Now what can be deduced from this pattern of substitutions as being important to Mahler's psychology? It is surely the fact that the classical Oedipus situation is everywhere pushed to the forefront of our notice, while the brother-sister, mother-son relationships are compulsively omitted. It seems that the former are used to cover up the latter, though traces of the sister relationship are preserved in the younger brother of sweet disposition, who is killed by the evil elder brother.

Is this perhaps the true symptomatic facade of Mahler's obsessional neurosis on which Freud was reluctant to elaborate? Is it that the Oedipus situation itself is used to mask and control an intense fear and hostility in his mother and sister relationships? After all, the object relationship which we take for granted in our adult life is only reached by complicated evolutionary processes. Suppose that the infant Mahler, owing to early emotional upsets were to proclaim 'I am the mother', or to use Reik's term 'the mater gloriosa', 'the creator spirit', then the storm to the heights of the Divine Father would take on a rather different aspect. Mahler would then, by identification with his mother, be able to eliminate his hostility to her and restore her to the Divine Father in the person of himself. Thus in his art he would be able to form a kind of synthesis, not entirely satisfactory perhaps but none the less a synthesis. In normal life however he would be likely to come to grief in his relations with his wife, because this would require that he project the image of his mother on to his wife to achieve a satisfactory love

relationship. But in his case this would be impossible if the image of his mother were suffused with hostility, such a projection would seem dangerous enough to give rise to castration fears, would be enough to account for his impotence, and probably for his feeling that his music had always been prevented from achieving the highest rank.

If however our suppositions are correct we should expect to find a considerable feminine element somewhere in Mahler's psychology and having found it we should analyse it.

Confirming Mahler's feminine aspect is some evidence of an early tendency towards homosexuality, that is, as a boy before the traces became buried in his obsessional symptoms.

First there is the episode of the drawer. Donald Mitchell (10) discusses Mahler's dreaminess and absence of mind as a small boy, and quoting from Alma Mahler he writes, "Every day his father exploded over the untidiness of Gustav's drawer - the one and only place where tidiness was demanded of him; and yet every day Gustav forgot all about it until the next explosion burst about his ears. It was all quite beyond him to bear this one trifling command in mind."

Donald Mitchell gives this as an example of hostility to his father and this is certainly one aspect of it though it is not the only one. 'Sexual provocation' would probably cover the situation better. Mahler's dreaminess and passivity suggest his mother-identification, his untidiness suggests intense bodily frustration, and the constant repetition of untidiness in the same place suggests frustration in that part of his body which could serve as a substitute for his mother's genital, displaced on to the drawer. And by provoking his father he hoped to satisfy his unconscious feminine wishes.

Now the anal stage in Man, points both forward to development and back to origins, and it seems that the incident of the hurdy-gurdy already quoted from Ernest Jones' biography of Freud, here provides a kind of signpost pointing in both directions.

There is little doubt that when Mahler rushed into the

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10. Gustav Mahler, *The Early Years*, p. 14



street he was fleeing both from sexual wishes, and in the Kleinian sense from brutal uninhibited aim in their achievement. We would say that the 'specially painful scene' between his parents, whether it consisted of words alone or whether blows were used marked a turning point in his development when taken together with the hurdy-gurdy. The shattering of his homosexual wishes and how he dealt with them in his subsequent life is one aspect, and linked with this is the other aspect already suggested, of the intense hostility in his mother-relationship masked by identification with her. The hurdy-gurdy was his refuge, but it also became a talisman by means of which these fantasies could be re-lived in his music, though he felt inhibited when he wanted to express noble or tender feelings as opposed to the bitter and the sarcastic. (11) Donald Mitchell has indeed discussed in his book how Mahler uses 'irony' in his music and how he converts 'festive noises' into 'fear and terror', and how he was an original in this field.

But in so far as the hurdy-gurdy points forward it also points back because it is associated with the 'specially painful scene', and we are lucky in being able to find in his infancy a specific cause for his mother hostility, that is in addition to that of an aggressive oral stage.

The wounding blow which must have contributed so much to the disturbance of Mahler's psyche was that his mother gave birth to another son soon after his own birth. Mahler was born in July 1860 and his brother who died aged 12 was born sometime in 1861, though it seems impossible to establish the month.

But even if we leave out of account the probability of his sudden weaning at a very early stage, it is safe to assume that another pregnancy so soon, with Mahler's consequent neglect by his mother in a poor home would have aroused the most negative feelings at a very much earlier date than children are usually called upon to face these things. The only way a child of this age can deal with the wish to destroy his

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11. *Op. cit.*, p. 196

mother and her children is to identify himself with her in giving birth. Thus something of the way in which Mahler's feminine complex and homosexuality were built up can be deduced. And an interesting confirmation of his mother-identification is given by (12) Donald Mitchell.

He writes, "One result of the nervous tensions that surrounded Mahler's childhood manifested itself very clearly as a tic in his right leg, which distinguished his gait: 'peculiar, unrhythmical, urgent and stumbling is his wife's description' . . . it is hard not to conclude that there was some sympathetic relationship between his tic and his mother's limp. Coincidences of this sort are too bad not to be true".

Bearing in mind the date and circumstances of his brother's birth we could surmise the cause of such a symptom, namely an earlier identification with his mother in bringing his baby brother into the world, and a repression of the bitterly hostile emotions to which this event gave rise, manifest only in the symptom. Freud, much later than 1910, would have called it 'conversion hysteria'. (13)

Let us return again to the sign-post and symbol of the hurdy-gurdy, and see whether it will shed any light on Mahler's true Oedipus situation and on his music generally. The hurdy-gurdy itself symbolises the mother, albeit sarcastically and ironically, while the man turning the handle is his father. When Mahler rushed into the street panic stricken beyond the point of any other feeling, he must have been steadied and calmed by the sight and sound of the hurdy-gurdy, and it must have enabled him to project all his fantasies in terms of it. Henceforth he would use his father as an agent who would play his fantasies out for him, and in this way he would be protected both against his frightening heterosexual fantasies, and against his homosexual wishes. And his parents

12. *Op. cit.*, p. 9

13. Freud would no doubt have linked it with Mahler's impotence in the general picture of his castration complex. The mother's absence of male organ is here important, as is Mahler's fear of his bride-to-be's virginity. "Breast", "child", "Penis," "Leg", "virginity" are stages in his castration syndrome.

should be kept grinding away all day, this should be his defence and the basis of his obsessional system, they should never stop working. History does not relate whether or no there was a monkey on the top.

There is no doubt that Mahler lived over again in his symphonies (particularly numbers 5 and 6) the infantile fury against his mother, and that he used his father, an uninhibited and brutal man as sanction and culprit for his functional and intellectual brilliance in these monumental works. The ironic and bitter medium of military music is suffused with cruelty and masochism. How he hates these imaginary soldiers who rape and pillage the earth and how incredible to reflect that these imaginary activities became true only three years after his death! At times irony, banality, and the sinister are so intermingled that the listener can find it hard to get his emotional bearings, and perhaps Mahler can be criticised on this account.

Nevertheless, his quality is built precisely on these negativisms, nobody has ever expressed rage and bitterness in quite this way: his compositions seem to find a parallel in Shelley's lines, "My name is Ozymandias king of kings, look on my works ye mighty and despair". Mahler sometimes gives a horrifying sense of ultimate emptiness, a sense which ropes him off from the 19th century romantics and makes him peculiarly significant to us, and it is hardly to be wondered at that his contemporaries could make little of him. He was a very provocative composer.

But how was it that he came to use the military as his symbol of destruction and rape?

It is simply that he used to frequent the barracks at Iglau as a small boy to listen to the music and to memorise the bugle calls. Donald Mitchell quotes (14) Gerald Abraham as saying, "If we want to make good composers of our children we should see that their minds are packed with the right sort of memories. The poor little Jewish boy who used to

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14. 'An Outline of Mahler' by Gerald Abraham, 'Music & Letters', Oct., 1932

hang about the barracks at Iglau . . . was storing up bad material for a symphonist worried about the universe". Leaving on one side the moral issue, it does seem that his father did not discourage Gustav in his barrack escapades, and the soldiers must have taken over imperceptibly the father fantasies and helped him to arrive at the state of mind which could produce the 5th and 6th Symphonies, namely one of brutality and martyrdom as identified with his father and mother respectively.

## PART II

Mahler managed to achieve a temporary stability in the early years of his marriage by the projection of his fantasies into the writing of his 5th and 6th symphonies, already referred to above. In this way for a time he gave the illusion of approaching normality, if we couple it with his achievement in begetting two children, one of whom died in childhood. But it was only an illusion because in his personal relations, Mahler was fundamentally incapable of projecting the female side of himself except as an abstraction. Listen to his wife. (15)

"I was shy when I was a girl, but in Mahler's company the affliction got to such a pitch that I could scarcely make a rational reply when spoken to; I felt I was nothing but his shadow". Next, "I lived his life, I had none of my own. . . . I separated myself inwardly from him, though with reverence, and waited for a miracle. I was blind: the miracle was there beside me - in the shape at least, of a pure abstraction. In spite of having children I was still a girl. He saw in me only the comrade, the mother and housewife, and was to learn too late what he had lost. His genius ate me up although he meant no murder."

Just before he consulted Freud she writes, "We spoke to each other as we had never spoken before. But the whole truth could not be spoken. My boundless love had lost by

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15. Gustav Mahler *Memories & Letters* by Alma Mahler. pp. 63, 95, 145, p. 64

degrees some of its strength and warmth; and now that my eyes had been opened by the impetuous assaults of a youthful lover, I knew how incredibly ingenuous I was. I knew that my marriage was no marriage and that my own life was utterly unfulfilled. I concealed all this from him, and although he knew it as well as I did, we played out the comedy to the end to spare his feelings."

And finally, searching for a possible remedy for what she calls significantly enough "his total unconcern", she writes, "I could have found in my music a complete cure for this state of things, but he had forbidden it when we were engaged, and now I dragged my hundred songs with me wherever I went - like a coffin into which I dared not look."

These extracts prove that Mahler could not expect to be able to 'abstract' his wife indefinitely. Time, coupled with his own growing realisation that something was seriously wrong must eventually have combined against him to provide the impasse he could not cross. His wife, whom he had in fantasy saved and preserved so long from attack by abstracting her, and thus in a sense by ignoring her, was able to convince him that he had in fact by this very method hurt her beyond repair. This brings us to the final stage of Mahler's life and the writing of the unfinished Tenth Symphony but before attempting insight into this phase, let us briefly review his obsessional system which, up to the time of its fracture was his way of life.

On the one hand we have the picture of the bad parents, associated with the hurdy-gurdy, who must be kept grinding away all the time to protect him from his own sexual and hostile fantasies. These he finds almost impossible to project in terms of his personal relationships, (16) though they are responsible for his fanatical concentration on his work whether in composing or conducting.

And on the other hand, kept quite apart from the bad parents, are the idealised good parents who can be projected both into his work and into his personal relations. The only trouble is that as regards his wife they are 'desexualised', for the obvious reason that it is the bad parents and especially

the bad mother who are the objects of all the sexual and hostile wishes.

Evidence of projected 'abstractions' in Mahler's 'work' as opposed to his personal relationships can be had by looking again at his music. It is not of course true to say that Mahler never senses 'the good mother' in his work. Deep feeling really is there as some of the slow movements show, nor can the occasional banality creeping into them really alter this fact, it is just that Mahler loved to systemise his works into philosophic concepts.

(17) Donald Mitchell has given a searching account in 17. *Op. cit.*, pp. 100, 101

his book of the 3rd symphony, of how Mahler as a young man distilled his own version of Nietzsche's philosophy into this symphony, "his acceptance of the world 'whole' both in its joy and its suffering", embracing the concept that if Man wants 'joy' he must accept 'suffering'. In all Mahler's symphonic work which apart from some lieder means all his work, we find the mother symbol, usually the 'Earth', but occasionally as in the 8th, the 'Creator Spiritus', or as in the 4th, 'Vienna' (18) he varies the symbol. Only the unfinished tenth is different, and here probably for the first as well as for the last time the music seems to be written direct to his wife, she is personalised direct and there is no symbolisation except in so far as she herself is symbolising the mother. Here at last we sense a music which links the infantile with the adult probably a characteristic of all really great music.

Had Mahler not married, much would have been different, but marry he did, and his struggle, ending in death, against the impasse to which marriage brought him has provided additional material, musical and psychological which would otherwise not have been available. He did not, like Beethoven, succeed in bending his fate to his will. Beethoven turned catastrophe into triumph by struggling against and

16. There is evidence of feminine jealousy in his relations with his sister 'Justine'.

18. This is a purely personal impression as far as 'Vienna' is concerned.



finally turning to victorious advantage the crippling disability of total deafness. The music of the late quartets is beyond the reach of any other composer.

Nevertheless Mahler in his Tenth Symphony made a real psychological break through but died as a result, which was a disaster if one thinks how different the course of 20th century music could have been if he had been alive in 1918. His influence is great, but has taken a long time to come through, and modern music would have benefited from his personal impact.

Until the eighth symphony it could be said that Mahler's life had been held together by an obsessional system which controlled persecutory fantasies. But from the eighth symphony onwards the position began to change. Henceforward there is less aggression, less sadism, and more idealism. Religious figures and the Earth, especially in connection with the idea of 'Abschied', hold the stage and the persecutory atmosphere of the 5th, 6th and 7th is less and less in evidence. As in his personal life he continued to 'abstract' his wife during this time, we can ask where the aggression had gone. We have already shown the gradual process which in his case ended with the collapse of his obsessional system, and there is ample evidence from many sources that this collapse heralded the appearance of massive guilt. 'I have lived wrongly' was his repeated cry at this time, but there is a clue which enables us to infer that this guilt had already begun to work in subterranean channels before the actual collapse.

When the time came for him to write his ninth symphony he was obsessed with the fear of death because he said that Beethoven, Schubert, and Bruckner had all died after completing their ninth symphonies. He first called *Das Lied von der Erde* his ninth, but as the superstition grew he crossed out the number and put in the title. Even then he called it the "Song of the Affliction of the Earth" before finalising the title.

His doubts, being irrational, suggest another cause for his anxiety which in view of what happened after, can only be ascribed to an unconscious guilt, thus he had already be-

gun to direct his aggression against himself. Analytically, at the time of the eighth symphony he was just beginning to move out of the 'paranoid' stage into that of the 'depressive'.

Now (19) Donald Mitchell has said, "The state of mind in which the Tenth Symphony was composed must have approximated very closely to a private hell". And Mahler has left a very convincing confirmation of this in the shape of his scribbled outbursts and exclamations on the manuscript. Third Movement ("Purgatorio"). Compassion! O God! O God, why hast thou forsaken me? Death! Transfiguration! Fourth movement title page: The devil leads me in a dance. . . . . Madness seizes me, Accursed! Demolish me that I may forget my being! That I may cease to exist, that I may . . . . . End of movement (muffled drum): None but you knows what it signifies! Ah! Ah! Ah! Fare thee well, my lyre! Farewell, Farewell, Farewell, Ah well - Ah Ah. Fifth Movement, Finale: To live for thee! To die for thee! Almschi!

An interesting point here is that this is the kind of material from which significant form in art originally stems. It is the basic emotional content of the work, or rather its scribbled reflection, before it is taken over to be expressed and elaborated in the 'plastique' of sound.

The title "Purgatorio" suggests an attempt by Mahler to rid himself of his internalised bad parents who are persecuting him inside, and thus to effect a psychological change. The cry, "O God! O God, why hast thou forsaken me" preceded by "Compassion!" and followed by "Death! Transfiguration!" suggests that life on one psychological level is shattered, that a change is imminent, and that Mahler has projected the 'process of change on to Death, and its 'result' on to 'Transfiguration', a kind of manic state. The demand for 'compassion' conceals the expectation of punishment and thus the confession of guilt, while the feeling of being deserted by God, also suggests a lessening of the per-

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19. Some notes on Mahler's 10th Symphony by Donald Mitchell: *The Musical Times*. December 1955 p. 656



secutory super-ego coupled with a great fear of the sense of internal responsibility which this may bring.

"The devil leads me in a dance", "madness seizes me", and "Accursed", are suggestive of conflict between id and super-ego, he is suffering deeply from his attacks on his mother, his appalling guilt at last breaks through in the cry 'demolish me that I may forget my being! that I may cease to exist that I may. . . . .

The muffled drum, and the cry to his wife "None but you knows what it signifies" does in fact refer to an incident in New York when Mahler and his wife watched a funeral procession from the windows of their flat. A fireman had died in an heroic rescue attempt. (20) Alma writes, "The scene brought tears to our eyes and I looked anxiously at Mahler's window. But he too was leaning out and his face was streaming with tears. The brief roll of the muffled drums impressed him so deeply that he used it in the Tenth Symphony".

However, in the setting under discussion the muffled drums symbolise Mahler's willingness to sacrifice himself for his mother and wife, to die heroically to save them from himself. Thus are his love, hate and guilt, jointly revealed, and in his concluding outbursts he shows how great is his love and how much the funeral procession of the heroic fireman meant to him. It is likely that the very fact that the hero was a fireman meant much to Mahler, since the aim of firemen is to extinguish the consuming flames and save objects from destruction.

Concluding, Mahler gives three sighs of Ah, and then he writes, "Fare thee well my lyre" ('lyre' was a nickname for his wife) then "Ah well" then two sighs and for the Fifth movement he writes, "To live for thee! to die for thee! Almschi!"

The fact that in this particular jumble he includes his wife's name is significant, the more so because he repeated her name hundreds of times in coma before his death: and

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20. Gustav Mahler, *Memories and Letters* by Alma Mahler. p. 113

the fact that he called out "Mozart" twice at the very last, though superficially incongruous, is nevertheless perfectly apt, for Mozart's music is the finest flower of the age of beauty, and beauty is akin to love. The reason why what there is of the Tenth Symphony is so good, and close to this, the reason why Mahler, though desperately anxious, preserved his love for his wife to the last, is because through death he atoned for his unconscious hostility against her, through death he saved and restored her, and through death he at last linked his personal with his artistic life since the Tenth Symphony is the expression of all this.

His wife, his music, love, beauty and guilt, are all very closely linked in his mind at the last, which clearly shows the integration possible to him, had it not been conditional on the loss of his own life. But once his dormant guilt had been aroused by various means, culminating in his wife telling him the real state of affairs, a tragedy was inevitable, since all the guilt in respect of the fantasied attacks on his mother's body, which, under his obsessional system had been held at bay for so long, suddenly turned against him when the system was shattered.

The tragedy is perhaps made more piquant because psychoanalysis in those days could hardly arrest the fatal process. No understanding or technique arising from the study of mother-identification then existed. Male aspects of women had been examined, but until Freud published the Schreber case in 1911, there was no scientific basis for further study which could have led to the concept of mother-identification and the two body conflict.

Since Mahler had been using his father as protection for himself, putting him into the breach so to speak in fantasied relations with his mother, the interpretation of the Oedipus Complex cannot have done him much good. In fact it might even have done him harm by removing another prop in his defence system against the two body conflict, which in turn would enormously have increased his sense of guilt without easing any tension, since the early conflict could not then be analysed.

Theodor Reik says, "The hours Mahler spent with Freud and the analytic insights obtained in that long session had a deep and lasting effect on the composer".

They did indeed, but perhaps not quite in the way Reik meant, the meeting with Freud took place in August 1910, and Mahler's last completely incapacitating illness began in February 1911.

Reik continues, "They removed his doubts and inhibitions, restored his capability for love and strengthened his self-confidence".

This assertion is rather contradicted by Alma Mahler's heartbreaking account of her husband's virtual last six months, though there is, as we have seen, a little truth in it. Whereas Mahler had ignored his wife before, he now heaped her with presents and became extremely angry if he thought she was being ill-treated or insulted in any way. Mahler seemed to be improving and disintegrating at the same time, and although officially he died of a 'streptococcal infection', Professor Chvostek, 'the most celebrated doctor in Vienna' to use (21) Alma's own words, gave it as his opinion that if Mahler had survived, his whole nervous system would have collapsed, and that the rest of his life would have been spent in a wheel chair. Thus it would seem that he was psychologically consumed from within.

Summing up then, we could say that so long as Mahler's guilt was unconscious he could live on the amazing virtuosity of his obsessional system, although terribly punished in not being able to enjoy the highest flights to which his genius entitled him; but when that virtuosity both in music and life was shown up as empty to him, and hurtful to others, introjection replaced projection and swamped his whole system.

This conscious guilt concerning his way of life and reflecting his deep unconscious aggression seems in his exclamations and outbursts to be linked irrevocably with his very early mother-infant situation, and in so far as this meant a working through of his depressive stage, however painfully,

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21. *Op. cit.*, p. 168

and as we know in his case to the point of no return, it yet enabled him in the unfinished parts of the Tenth Symphony to reach and promise a higher genius than in his previous work.

Only two problems remain, that of his conducting and that of his relationship with his sister.

If it is surprising that we should not have said more about Mahler's conducting, he may well have been the greatest of all conductors, it is because we have written in the spirit of the modern psychoanalysis on which (22) Dr. Winnicott comments, "From my personal point of view, the work of Klein has enabled psychoanalytic theory to begin to include the 'idea of an individual's value' whereas in early psychoanalysis the statement was in terms of health', and neurotic 'ill-health'. Value is intimately bound up with the capacity for guilt-feeling."

There is no doubt whatever that Mahler, although deriving considerable satisfaction from conducting, sought his 'value', regardless of cost, from composing. It is an open question however as to how far he used his genius as a conductor to take up time which could have been spent composing. If he did at all, then to that extent it could be said that although conducting was an offshoot of his genius, he nevertheless at times employed it obsessively.

The problem of his sister Justine is more difficult. It is tempting to neglect it or throw it into the synthesis of his female syndrome. Although there are no facts or deductions to support any alternative treatment there are one or two nuances which deserve attention. (23) Alma Mahler writes, "Justine got to know the distinguished violinist Rosé, 1st violin at the Royal Opera immediately she arrived in Vienna. They fell in love and embarked on a love affair which they kept a secret from fear of Mahler's strict morals. Mahler was extremely puritanical. Up to now he had been in a sense married to Justine. He regarded himself as bound to

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22. *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, p. 27

23. *Op. cit.*, pp. 9, 10, 169

her by vows of fidelity, and deliberately eluded all temptations. . . . He exacted without mercy the same self-denial of Justine. When he discovered that his trust had met only with deceit he was so disconcerted that he refused to speak to Justine for weeks. . . . At the same time he told her that he now regarded himself as entirely free. . . . His love of her, great as it had been, was now done with forever."

Another incident concerns her visit to him on his death-bed: "Who is this lady? he stammered. She fled, but Mahler instantly recognised 'Berliner' his next visitor.

Now we should expect to find the ingredients of hostility, jealousy, and identification in these examples, together with the obsessional control of the female factor. This is typical of the substitutions in *Das klagende Lied* and in a way typical of his relations with his wife. We need no delve outside these patterns for anything else.

But the power of the eye-witness account is such that something else does seem to be conveyed. If we read the examples again, we get a feeling that Mahler imagined he was actually part of his sister, and that he suffered from a physical sense of shock when he realised that after all he was not, in that he behaved as if some kind of disaster had happened to him, and yet, by not recognising her, as if it had not really happened to him.

And whether this reflects the dismay at the discovery that he was a separate entity from his mother, that instinctual disaster from the shattering of 'primary identification', whether this disaster was not sufficiently compensated for and lived through at the oral stage, because of his infant brother; or whether the introjections and projections in the oral stage itself, coupled with the arrival of the brother were responsible for such a state, which may or may not be hypothetical are matters for conjecture. But if the state is valid in itself, then there is no doubt that it would have contributed powerfully to the extraordinary difficulty he had in projecting and personalising his alter ego.

Finally, had this projection been easier, a certain "quali-

ty' would have been added to his music, because what is let go voluntarily can be voluntarily gathered again.

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## In D. H. Lawrence's *The Man Who Died* The Function of Allusions and Symbols

by

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Always concerned with the problems of religion and sexual love, D. H. Lawrence, near the end of his life, tried to revive older myths as a means of revitalizing what he considered to be the sterile and misdirected Christian religion. Christianity, he felt, "had misunderstood love throughout its history." (1) In Christian society, love—even sexual love—had become too intellectualized. The pale concepts of Christian love were without realistic basis in the deep well-springs of being. Lawrence pled "for a denial of the intellect, a reassertion of 'the blood' as a source of religious experience." (2) In one of his letters, he wrote, "My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true." (3) Equating consciousness with affective states, Lawrence, in three of his later works, *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), *The Man Who Died* (1929) and *The Apocalypse* (1931) censured Christianity and championed the vitalistic paganism of the "religion of the blood."

In the short novel *The Man Who Died*, D. H. Lawrence relates his version of the revitalizing experiences of Jesus after the resurrection, a version vastly different from Biblical accounts of Christ's appearances after death. (4) Although the body of Jesus has been taken down and laid in the tomb, he has not really died. But his old missionary life as teacher and savior is dead within him, and he is free to seek the true sources of human happiness in a more vital life than he has led before. He realizes that he has been saved from his own salvation, that he has neglected the needs of his own body to pursue a spiritual mission. Leaving his former followers, he



finds, in a temple of Isis, the fulfillment for which he has been searching. Although it is more difficult to love on the sexual level than it had been to die, he learns at last what human love is and recognizes that he has offered and asked only the corpse of love before. In telling his version of the story of the risen Jesus in *The Man Who Died*, Lawrence employs both conventional symbols and Biblical and mythical allusions as structural and thematic devices. In this paper, I shall discuss the symbols and examine the sources of the most important of the allusions as an aid in determining their function in the novel.

The central symbol in Part I is a young gamecock owned by a poor peasant. The cock "[looks] a shabby little thing, but . . . [puts] on brave feathers as spring [advances], and [is] resplendent with arched and orange neck by the time the fig trees" are putting out. (5) Cutting a splendid figure in that dirty yard, the cock learns to arch his neck and crow shrill answers to the faraway, unseen cocks crowing beyond the wall. The peasant, fearing that his prized bird will fly away, ties him to a post. But one day, with a mighty burst of strength, the rooster snaps the string that holds him and flies over the wall. At the same moment, a man awakens "from a long sleep in which he [has been] tied up" (p. 7).

In these few opening paragraphs, Lawrence, through the metaphor of the gamecock, foreshadows the nature of the new life to which the man is awakening and refers back to the old life he has left behind. The gamecock is a fitting structural device; it heralds both Jesus's death and his rebirth, both Peter's denial of knowing him (John 18: 15-27) and his own affirmation through self-knowledge. Thematically, the idea of male sexuality is effectively presented in the image of a cock, which, besides being the male of its species, suggests the phallic connotations of its name in slang usage. From the moment when both the man and the cock break loose from the fetters that bind them (the bandages wound around the buried man and the string attached to the cock's spur), the man is identified with the cock. It is clear that the man will break not only his physical bonds but also



the metaphorical fetters of sexual repression that have prevented his living so vital a life as the rooster has enjoyed.

The gamecock is a very aggressive bird, and Lawrence graphically illustrates this cock's sexual activity as both dominant and tender. Even when he is again fettered, the young rooster crows with a voice "stronger than chagrin. It [is] the necessity to live, and even to cry out the triumph of life" (p. 19). Watching him, the man sees "not the bird alone, but the short, sharp wave of life of which the bird [is] the crest" (p. 20). When he throws a bit of bread to the cock, "it [calls] with an extraordinary cooing tenderness, tousling and saving the morsel for the hens" (p. 21). But "when his favourite hen [comes] strolling unconcernedly near him, emitting the lure, he [pounces] on her with all his feathers vibrating. And the man who had died [watches] the unsteady, rocking vibration of the bent bird, and it [is] not the bird he [sees], but one wave-tip of life overlapping for a minute another in the tide of the swaying ocean of life" (pp. 21-22). Watching the gamecock, the man sees in its life a more vital existence than he has known before in the life of the spirit. "Surely," he says, "thou art risen to the Father, among birds" (p. 35). But it is clear that he uses the phrase to denote the new vital life which he himself has not yet learned to live rather than the heavenly, spiritual life denoted by the phrase in Biblical usage (See John 20:17). When he decides to go out in search of the new vital life, he buys the cock from the peasant. But there is a difference between this purchase and the purchase by which Jesus himself had been betrayed (See Matthew 26:14-16), for the man who had been sold into imprisonment and death buys freedom and life for the bird. By this time the cock has become a symbol of virtue for him, and the life of the cock the good life. When he meets two of his followers along the way, this conversation ensues:

"Why do you carry a cock?"

"I am a healer," he [says], "and the bird hath virtue."

"You are not a believer?"

"Yea! I believe the bird is full of life and virtue." (p.

43.) At last he comes to an inn, where the cock engages in a fight with the innkeeper's rooster. The man, indicating his own growing willingness to risk all for life, prevents the innkeeper from stopping the fight; he tells the innkeeper that if the gamecock loses, the innkeeper may have him to eat and that if he wins, the innkeeper may keep him for his hens. When the gamecock wins, the man who had died says to it, "Thou at least hast found thy kingdom, and the females of thy body" (p. 45). The speech, which parallels Christ's words to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), illustrates again the change in Jesus's attitude toward life: no longer looking to be more than human, he now wishes to be what is even more difficult for him to be—an integrated man.

The gamecock, as I have tried to show, is the central symbol in Part I of *The Man Who Died*, but there are other symbols and other allusions in this section of the novel which serve to point up the contrast between the old life and the new and to illustrate Jesus's changing attitude as he emerges into the rich vital life of the blood.

After arising from the tomb, Jesus is taken to the humble cottage of a peasant. Still numb with pain and "the great void nausea of utter disillusion" (p. 14), he has no desire, even for food and drink. Nevertheless, he moistens a bit of bread in water and eats it. At his "last supper" he had had his twelve disciples with him, but at what might be called his "first breakfast" he has only a poor peasant and his wife. But whereas three of his disciples had fallen asleep as he prayed and one had betrayed him and one had thrice denied him (See Matthew 26: 36-75), these peasants, though "limited, meagre in their life, without any splendour of gesture and of courage" (p. 16), offer him shelter at the risk of their own lives. "They [have] no nobility, but fear [makes] them compassionate" (p. 16).

When the peasant departs for work in the vineyard of his master, Jesus asks to lie in the yard in the sun. This he does again for the following two days. The sun appears here, of course, in its usual function as a health-renewing,

life-giving force. In its suspension in the sky it also has phallic significance, thus foreshadowing Jesus's subsequent identification with Osiris, who is often represented as a sun-god. (6) Looking at the stupid, dirty peasant, the man who had died thinks to himself: "Why, then, should he be lifted up? Clods of earth are turned over for refreshment, they are not to be lifted up. Let the earth remain earthy, and hold its own against the sky. I was wrong to seek to lift it up. I was wrong to try to interfere. . . . No man can save the earth from tillage. It is tillage, not salvation . . . ." (pp. 22-23.) The allusion to Jesus's statement about his own crucifixion and glorification, "And I, if I be lifted up from earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32), illustrates Jesus's changing attitude toward all humanity, including himself.

Lawrence's version of the conversation at the sepulchre between Jesus and Mary Magdalene (Madeleine in *The Man Who Died*) is quite different from Biblical accounts of the same conversation (See Matthews 28:9-10, Mark 16:9, and John 20:14-18). One or two differences which illustrate the Lawrentian view may be noted here. In John's account, Jesus says to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). But in Lawrence's version, he says, "Don't touch me, Madeleine. . . . Not yet! I am not yet healed and in touch with men" (p. 24). The change of phrase from "ascended to my Father" to "in touch with men" indicates Jesus's shift in allegiance from the spiritual forces of death to the physical forces of life. Later in the conversation, Madeleine asks him, "And will you come back to us?" And he answers, "What is finished is finished . . . . For me, that life is over" (p. 25). This part of the conversation has no parallel in the gospel accounts, but the statement, "What is finished is finished," recalls Christ's final words on the cross as recorded by John: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30). In Lawrence's version, what is "finished" is Jesus's

spiritual life. As he goes on to explain, "The teacher and the saviour are dead in me; now I can go about my business, into my own single life" (p. 25). Once his parents had found him, at the age of twelve, teaching the elders of the temple. "And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49.) His attitude on whose "business" to concern himself with has changed radically since then!

Obtaining a little money from Madeleine, the man who had died returns to the cottage and gives it to the peasant's wife. "Take it!" he says. "It buys bread, and bread brings life" (p. 32). Once in the old life he had fasted for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, where the devil had tempted him: "And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. / And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:3-4). Again his opinion has apparently changed.

Thinking over the changes that have been wrought in him by death, he says to himself, "Now I belong to no one and have no connection, and mission or gospel is gone from me. Lo! I cannot make even my own life, and what have I to save? . . . I can learn to be alone" (pp. 36-37). He admits the truth of the mocking words of the chief priests as he hung on the cross: "He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Mark 15:31). Aware of the vital forces of life going on around him, the man who had died thinks again of some of his old ideas: "The Word is but the midge that bites at evening. Man is tormented with words like midges, and they follow him right into the tomb. But beyond the tomb they cannot go. Now I have passed the place where words can bite no more and the air is clear, and there is nothing to say, and I am alone within my own skin, which is the walls of all my domain" (p. 38). But once he had told a parable about the sower and the word (Mark 4:14-20). And once when many of his followers had deserted him, he had said to his twelve disciples, "Will ye also go away" and Simon Peter had answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast

the words of eternal life" (John 6:67-68). Now Jesus thinks that these "words" lead not to "eternal life" but to "the tomb," beyond which they cannot go.

The man who had died also has a new definition of immortality. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy of "our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Timothy 1:10). But the risen Jesus, Lawrence says, "healed of his wounds, and enjoyed the immortality of being alive without fret. For in the tomb he had life his striving self . . . ." (p. 39).

In Part II of *The Man Who Died*, D. H. Lawrence introduces the Osiris-Isis myth as a thematic device. The section opens at the temple of Isis in Search, which stands on a peninsula, "a little, tree-covered tongue of land between two bays" (p. 50), facing southwest toward Egypt, toward "the splendid sun of winter as he [curves] down towards the sea" (p. 49). As the man watches, two half-naked slaves, a boy of about seventeen and a girl, dress pigeons for the evening meal, making of the process the ritual of a sacrifice. When the girl lets one of the pigeons escape and fly away, the boy beats her with his fist until she slips to the ground, pretending to be hurt. Lawrence's description continues: "He twisted her over, intent and unconscious, and pushed his hands between her thighs, to push them apart. And in an instant he was covering her in the blind, frightened frenzy of a boy's first passion. Quick and frenzied his young body quivered naked on hers, blind for a minute. Then it lay quite still, as if dead." (p. 53).

A prose passage pervaded by a greater aura of sex would be hard to imagine. Sexuality emanates not only from the detailed description of the sex act and the ritual sacrifice (7) but also from the carefully chosen phallic symbols (the peninsula, the sun, the trees, the pigeons) and yonic symbols (the temple, the two bays, the sea), indeed, from the very phrasing itself: "radiance flooded in between the pillars of painted wood," "the light stood erect and magnificent off the invisible sea, filling the hills" (p. 49), "on the rocks un-

der which the sea smote and sucked," "a high wall, inside which was a garden" (p. 50). But D. H. Lawrence, for all his artistry, did not originate these symbols any more than he originated sex; he merely employed them effectively as thematic images to introduce the myth of Isis and Osiris.

The priestess serves the goddess Isis—not Isis, Mother of Horus or Isis Bereaved, Lawrence is careful to make clear, but Isis in Search, who, after the evil brother Set tore Osiris's body into fourteen pieces and scattered them abroad, sailed throughout the marshes burying each piece as she found it, though she never found the genitals. (8) A few obvious parallels between Christ and Osiris make the Osiris myth a particularly appropriate choice for fusion with the Christ myth. Both performed seeming miracles, Osiris introducing the treading of grapes and Christ turning water into wine. Both were betrayed by men who called themselves brothers. Both were slain. And both were deified. One essential difference between them, of course, is that Christ was a virgin and Osiris was not. Lawrence's purpose in introducing the Osiris myth is to infuse the Christ myth with a new vitality, or more specifically, through the identification of the risen Jesus with Osiris, to repudiate the sexless, spiritual element of Christianity in favor of the sexual, physical element of the Osiris myth.

In *The Man Who Died*, Christianity and the Osiris myth are brought together when the risen Jesus asks shelter at the temple of Isis in Search. The priestess gives him a place to sleep in the cave of the goats, which becomes a place of rebirth for him, recalling the stable of his nativity (See Luke 2:1-20). It also compares with the tomb from which he arose at the beginning of the novel. Both the sepulchre, "a carved hole in the rock" in which he lies "tied up" (p. 7), and the cave, a dark place, "absolutely silent from the wind," in which there is "a little basin of rock where the maidenhair fern [fringes] a dripping mouthful of water" (p. 62), are womb symbols. But whereas his emergence from the tomb marks a physical rebirth, his emergence from the cave, as the



satyr-image of the goats indicates, marks the rebirth of long repressed sexuality.

The priestess, who has seen Jesus's nail-scarred hands and feet as he slept, believes, on the basis of his "beauty of much suffering" (p. 65), that he is the lost Osiris. Greatly attracted to him sexually, she invites him to the temple, detaining him for a second night. "The all-tolerant Pan [watches] over them" (p. 75), and Pan's influence is apparently felt by the man who had died, for he says to himself, "Unless we encompass it in the greater day, and set the little life in the circle of the greater life, all is disaster" (p. 80). He agrees to come to the priestess again, but before he goes he meditates on the "destinies of splendour" which await him, admitting to himself, "I am almost more afraid of this touch than I was of death. For I am more nakedly exposed to it" (p. 84). (Compare with Matthews 26:39.) When he goes to her, wanting now desperately to be healed in flesh and spirit, he is still afraid, still repressed and inhibited sexually. But at her gentle suggestion, he removes his clothes and walks naked to the altar of Isis. "It has hurt so much!" he says. "You must forgive me if I am still held back." And the woman answers softly, "Let me anoint you! . . . Let me anoint the scars!" (pp. 87-88.) To Lawrence, the sexual union is a sacramental act.

As the priestess chafes Jesus's feet "with oil and tender, tender healing" (p. 88), he remembers another woman who had washed his feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, and poured precious ointment on them (Luke 7:36-38). He realizes that he had let the woman, who had been a prostitute, serve him with "the corpse of her love" (p. 89). Suddenly it dawns on him why he was put to death: "I asked them all to serve me with the corpse of their love. And in the end I offered them only the corpse of my love. This is my body—take and eat—my corpse—" (See Luke 7:36-38.)

. . . "I wanted them to love with dead bodies. If I had kissed Judas with a live love, perhaps he would never have kissed me with death. Perhaps he loved me in the flesh, and I willed that he should love me bodylessly, with the corpse

of love—" (pp. 89-90.) With this new self-knowledge and the woman's tender ministrations, "a new sun [is] coming up in him" (p. 93). Touching the woman, he thinks, "On this rock I built my life" (p. 94). The allusion to Jesus's words to Simon Peter, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18), emphasizes the contrast between the old life and the new. No longer interested in the spiritual world or its human institutions, he now wants only to build a solid life for himself and the woman he loves in the mystical communion of flesh with flesh. "He [crouches] to her, and he [feels] the blaze of his manhood and his power rise up in his loins, magnificent." "I am risen!" (p. 94), he says. (See Luke 24:6.) The "new sun" and the words "I am risen!" indicate erection, but they also have a more general phallic significance: he is "risen" with the "new sun" of the vital life of the blood. "Father!" he says, "why did you hide this from me?" For he recognizes for the first time "the deep, interfolded warmth, warmth living and penetrable, the woman, the heart of the rose!" He says to himself, "My mansion is the intimate warm rose, my joy is this blossom!" (pp. 94-95). Once he had said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:2). Now he recognizes that there is one "mansion" that the "Father" has hidden from him!

"My hour is upon me," he thinks, "I am taken unawares—" (p. 95). The allusion to Jesus's words to his mother, "mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4), and, on another occasion, to Andrew and Philip, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23), Lawrence places at the exact moment of the first sexual experience of the man who had died, thus altering the meaning of "hour" from "hour of death" to "hour of life."

After the sexual union has been accomplished, the man says, "This is the great atonement, the being in touch" (p. 97). The allusion to the Apostle Paul's words, "we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now



received the atonement" (Romans 5:11), shows by contrast Lawrence's opposition to the Pauline direction taken by Christianity since the time of Christ.

A short time later, the priestess discovers that she is pregnant, and she is afraid that her mother and her mother's slaves will make trouble for her and her lover. "Let not your heart be troubled!" he says. "I have died the death once" (p. 99). She quotation of Jesus's earlier words to his disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1), is here given a new dimension: he wants her to believe in him not as a savior but as a faithful lover. Then he tells her, "I must go now soon. Trouble is coming to me from the slaves. But I am a man, and the world is open. But what is between us is good, and is established. Be at peace. And when the nightingale calls again from your valley-bed, I shall come again, sure as Spring" (p. 100). The fusion of Christianity with the Osiris myth is now accomplished. This passage contains allusions to both religions. The Biblical reference is to Christ's words to his disciples, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3) and "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). The promise and the benediction are both enhanced by the references to the Osiris myth: Osiris, who "travelled over the world, diffusing the blessings of civilization and agriculture wherever he went," (9) is, in his aspect as a corn-god, closely identified with the cycle of the seasons and the subject of popular rites of the Egyptian harvest in the spring. (10) In addition, the sexual connotation of such words as "nightingale," "valley-bed," and "I shall come again" invests the passage with the phallic significance of Lawrence's "religion of the blood."

As I have tried to show, the Biblical allusions in *The Man Who Died* serve as reference points in the dialectic which Lawrence sets up between the self-destructive life of the spirit and the creative life of the blood. Words which in their Biblical contexts state basic tenets of orthodox Chris-

tianity are made applicable to the "religion of the blood" in their altered meanings in the context of Lawrence's novel. The Christian religion, which Lawrence thinks is over-intellectualized and, therefore, sterile, is infused with the vigorous concepts of flesh-and-blood sexuality through allusions to the Osiris-Isis myth. The symbolism in the novel usually has phallic significance. If it is carnal, however, it is never licentious. It is, rather, the religious imagery through which Lawrence evokes the mystery of sex.

In 1912 Lawrence wrote, "I worship Christ, I worship Jehovah, I worship Pan, I worship Aphrodite. But I do not worship hands nailed and running with blood upon a cross, nor licentiousness, nor lust. I want them all, all the gods. They are all God. But I must serve in real love. If I take my whole passionate, spiritual and physical love to the woman who in turn loves me, that is how I serve God. And my hymn and my game of joy is my work. . . ." (11)

*The Man Who Died* is a hymn to the rebirth of such a God. "Rare women," the philosopher tells the priestess of Isis in Search, "wait for the re-born man" (p. 58). And through sexual union with her, Jesus Christ, in an entirely different sense than he intended in his words to Nicodemus, is "born again" (See John 3:3). Written as a parable for contemporary Christian society, the novel sets forth one of D. H. Lawrence's major themes: rebirth of the whole man through tenderness in the sexual relationship.

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#### FOOTNOTES

(1) Frederick J. Hoffman, "Lawrence's Quarrel with Freud," *The Achievement of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Harry T. Moore (Norman, 1953), p. 114.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 123.

(3) D. H. Lawrence, as quoted in Hoffman, p. 123.

(4) See Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20 and 21. All further citations to The Holy Bible in my text are to the Authorized King James version.

(5) D. H. Lawrence, *The Man Who Died* (New York, 1950), p. 3. All further citations to *The Man Who Died* in my text are to this edition.

(6) Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 1 vol., abridged edition (New York, 1951), pp. 446-447.

(7) Ibid., p. 430. Frazer gives an account of the Egyptian tradition of decking a young virgin in gay apparel and throwing her into the river as a sacrifice to the river-god, who was conceived of as a male power.

(8) Ibid., pp. 421-424.

(9) Ibid., p. 421.

(10) Ibid., p. 431.

(11) D. H. Lawrence, as quoted in Kenneth Rexroth, "Introduction," *The Selected Poems of D. H. Lawrence* (New York, 1947), p. 1.

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# Popular Cartoons and Prevailing Anxieties

by

Mary Jeffery Collier

Kris, discussing at some length caricature and the comic, speaks of these as "regression in the service of the ego" and, elsewhere, states: "The compromise achieved by the comic is the foundation of a phenomenon well-known to psychoanalysts: The comic as a mechanism of defense. We know it from clinical experience: Here it can appear in various guises to master and ward off emotions, above all anxiety." (1, Pp 177; 215).

In the present paper, an attempt will be made to test Kris's hypothesis in an informal way. First, some popular magazines of wit and humor will be searched for humorous cartoons which relate to contemporary situations thought to be anxiety-producing to Americans. Second, representative examples of these cartoons will be discussed with particular attention to any, obvious ways in which they might be conducive to reducing or mastering hypothetical anxiety.

The magazines to be explored are *The New Yorker* and *Punch*, American and English publications with some reputation for their humor, and apparently well accepted as such judging from their rather stable and large circulations. To these will be added *The Saturday Review*, a popular American weekly which, though not primarily a humor magazine, carries a few, timely and humorous cartoons, sometimes by cartoonists who contribute also to *The New Yorker*. The issues to be searched are those appearing in the spring and especially the summer of 1958.

Situations which will be considered as anxiety-provoking to Americans during this period will be: first, American foreign relations in general, but particularly relations with

Russia regarding a proposed summit conference and concerning the Middle East; second, the revelation by Sputnik of unsuspected, Russian scientific competence with ensuing American eagerness to surpass Russia, particularly by reaching the moon first; and, third, the so-called business recession and resultant preoccupation with assessing and combatting it. The writer's judgment, that these situations are or were anxiety-provoking to Americans, as well as the assumption, that certain cartoons about them are humorous, will be inevitably somewhat subjective, as will be the effort to discuss their possibly defensive functions. However, if such cartoons are located and if their possibly defensive functions can be discussed in a communicable way, it is proposed that Kris's thesis will seem, if not finally proven, at least more plausible.

I. 1. First, regarding American foreign relations, one can identify several sub-groups among the cartoons dealing with this general topic. One such sub-group seems to be concerned with the notion of American unpopularity abroad and with the possibility that this might arise partly because of American ineptness. Exemplifying the concern with unpopularity is Dana Findon's June 7th cartoon in *The New Yorker* which shows Uncle Sam outstretched on the analyst's couch, confiding: "Everybody hates me." One might say that this cartoon not only expresses some anxiety about, but even playfully exaggerates the extent of, Uncle Sam's unpopularity thereby making any, actually existing unpopularity seem relatively slight and therefore less disturbing. Furthermore, in Uncle Sam's words and in his position as patient, there is an implication of insight into the "facts", if not the degree, of his unpopularity and a reassuring hint that he is virtuously trying to understand and remedy his part in it.

As if also expressing but then in fantasy mastering a similar anxiety about foreign unpopularity, Lorenz's (N.Y., July 12) cartoon shows an American G.I., himself, writing some words which, in fact, are occasionally written about him. On night patrol, in an unidentified but obviously foreign city, he is printing on a convenient wall: "Yankee go home." One might say that this cartoon expresses anxiety about Am-

erican unpopularity but strives for mastery of it by showing the American G.I. doing what is really being done to him. The technique is similar to that used by children who must passively suffer some pain or indignity but who then express and control the resultant anxiety or anger by actively doing to a toy or playmate, or pretending to do, what they have themselves had to passively endure. The Lorenz cartoon softens possible anxiety about implied unpopularity also by hinting that the American who is abroad for reasons of duty actually prefers to go home just as he is being "told", to do; thus, he writes "Go home", to himself. Though possibly feeling hurt that others write this inhospitable message to him, the American may be musing that he really wishes he did have to go home; in short, if Americans fail completely abroad, they might be disappointed but still save face by saying they were also relieved since it was "duty", not "desire", which took them abroad in the first place.

Fisher (Sat. Rev., Aug. 9) introduces the ticklish, American-ineptness theme in what might well be interpreted as this comforting context: "We Americans may be diplomatically inept but we aren't the only ones; diplomacy is universally a foolish game." Fisher's cartoon evokes such a context by showing a presumably American official opening the door into a waiting room where, among American crests and flags, several identical and well-dressed gentlemen nurse their attaché cases. One might well feel that they are all diplomats together whether American-friend or American-foe and actually indistinguishable from one another, as well as from the American official, except that the latter has no attaché case. Thus, as merely part of universal, diplomatic foolishness, the American's rather inept announcement in the caption seems more "diplomatic" than "American" and, therefore, less embarrassing: "Will the ambassadors of those countries holding kidnapped Americans kindly move to the head of the line. The Secretary will see you first." Some further reassurance is introduced by the caption's hint that, though about to be bullied by diplomatic "kidnappers", the



United States is nevertheless for the moment in control of negotiation mechanics.

I. 2. A second sub-group of American-foreign-relations cartoons are those which refer, directly or indirectly, to the possibility of a presumably life-destroying, atomic war. In these cartoons, a popular technique which might well serve to reduce associated anxiety is to indicate that there has always been war and/or that the current fear of total destruction, now long-lived, has not yet been realized and might even be exaggerated. For example, Deckers's (N.Y., June 14) cartoon shows what might be Roman soldiers with swords, shields, and helmets; they are manipulating a loaded catapult machine which is set up, ready for action. The machine is somewhat clumsy and obviously limited in its effectiveness though presumably ingenious and fearful in its day. This notion of awkward ineffectiveness and possibly exaggerated menace seems to be comfortingly transferred to modern, scientific precision and destructive potential, by the "contemporary" caption: "X, IX, VIII, VII, VI, V, IV, III, . . .".

Fisher's (N.Y., Aug. 2), full-page cartoon shows what should be and yet is not "total" destruction; in it two, ragged and dishevelled men stand on a cliff ledge looking at the remains of what seems to have been a large city. The horror which might otherwise be evoked by the sight of such destruction is, of course, diminished by the presence of the two survivors whose desert-island-traditional garb provokes a welcome association with previously encountered, funny cartoons; the survivors' juxtaposition to so much devastation probably also stirs some reassuring fantasy of man's indestructibility. The caption crystallizes all this with a phrase popularly associated with a somewhat devil-may-care attitude toward the outcome of far less fatal, perhaps expected, possibly sexual, maybe even trivial conflicts: "Well, c'est la guerre".

Allied in theme to the previously discussed cartoons about potential atomic disasters is one by Anton (Punch, July 30). By an English cartoonist in an English magazine, it may be

less closely associated with the possible outcome of specifically American foreign relations than were the cartoons just discussed except in so far as the British attribute a more crucial role to America than to themselves in international, atomic, or military matters. Anton boldly introduces an actual atomic explosion by drawing two, mushroom-shaped clouds on a distant horizon. He then brings in a note of reassuringly familiar humor about feminine failings and creates a sense of superiority to the consequences of the blast by placing in the foreground an attractive, sunbathing young couple turned so they can look at the mushroom-shaped clouds; the cheerful-looking young woman is saying: "I knew I'd forgotten to turn off the gas." In holiday mood, as it were, she is not worried about this relatively minor, domestic tragedy let alone about the dangers of unsuspected, atomic explosions. There is perhaps further reassurance in the underlying hint that some day the atom may well be harnessed even by such slap-happy and scientifically dense young women as this for routine cooking instead of, as now, only by sophisticated scientists or powerful nations.

I. 3. A third, sub-group of American-foreign-relations cartoons are those dealing with a proposed summit conference. Fisher's (Sat. Rev., April 19) cartoon translates the American-Russian preliminaries about summit conference details to the distant and therefore presumably safer realm of myth and early history by sketching two armies, equipped with outmoded swords and armor and headed by kings, crowned, robed, and complete with chariots who, despite their obvious preparedness to fight, are instead resorting to a conference. A messenger, from the farther to the nearer king, addresses the latter, parodying contemporary, diplomatic manoeuvring when he says: "They're holding out for even *higher-level* negotiations. . . Zeus, Apollo, Hera, Mars . . .". The exaggeration, the removal of negotiations from present reality, the implication that such negotiations are apt to end up in ridiculous, prestige battles, all seem to provide for the cartoonist and his audience an anxiety-reducing distance from,

and perhaps a sense of safe superiority to, the conference participants.

CEM (N.Y., July 12) provides a setting for the summit crises which is also "out of this world" when he shows Gabriel high on a cloud and arrested in the final act of raising a trumpet to his lips by the arrival of a gesturing angel. The latter, though bowing obsequiously before Gabriel, expresses himself in colloquial words which seem comical in the heavenly context: "Hold it, Gabriel! The summit meeting is on again." Thus, anxiety is expressed; but at least temporary reassurance is also provided.

Mansbridge's (Punch, July 9) method of softening summit-meeting anxiety, while also ventilating a feeling of urgency, is to caricature the leaders of several nations dressed as boys in vacation-style shorts, open-necked shirts, and knapsacks labelled "Nuclear Club". Eisenhower, Krushchev, and Macmillan have climbed out on a branch, beginning to crack high over open water; they are reaching out to a bird which is sitting on a nest at the end of the branch and holding in its beak what seems to be an olive twig. De Gaulle, another member of this not-so-peaceful "club", is scrambling up the lower part of the tree trunk; another member, vaguely oriental in appearance is approaching the tree. In this cartoon, summit-meeting and nuclear anxieties might well be expressed. If so, they are probably made more tolerable because, with comical incongruity, the mature leaders of the powerful nations concerned are portrayed as boys engaged not in sober negotiations but, instead in a childish prank of which the outcome, therefore, seems less fateful: they are reaching for the dove of "peace" while wearing "nuclear" knapsacks.

I. 4. A fourth, and final subgroup of cartoons on the subject of American international relations are those about the Middle East. Many of these share a common feature, namely, preoccupation with examples of inconsequential East-West differences as if the cartoonist were using these minor differences as less frightening symbols for the more consequential, East-West political differences. Cartoons of this sort

seem particularly comical when there is also present in them an implication of East-West feelings that are incongruously similar, despite the obvious differences. First, Soglow's (N. Y., Aug. 16) cartoon shows an antique-store window in which, among various objects are several that might be idols; of these, one central many-armed and beak-faced figure is particularly conspicuous. The proprietor, standing in the window and two passers-by, on the street, register shock or pain as they gaze at a man whose head is swathed in Eastern style; he is prostrate on the sidewalk before the many-armed figure in the store window. Thus, though Easterners and Westerners might presumably share a "worship" of antiques, East-West differences, unimportant and perhaps therefore amusing seem to arise in the mode of "worship".

Second, Sprod (Punch, July 23) introduces the theme of East-West differences in sexual arrangements when he shows what appears to be a rather stereotyped, turbaned, Eastern potentate almost to the top of a ship's gang plank, followed by what seems to be four of his wives, in stereotyped, Eastern garb. Approaching the gangplank on the dock are four more "wives", indistinguishable from the first four except that they wear labels: "Not wanted on voyage." The cartoon has no caption; however, the obvious interest displayed by the welcoming ship's captain, his assistant, two passengers, and a bystander seems to imply that in theory, if not in practice, the Eastern system is of interest also to Westerners. Thus, though different, they are also similar.

Third, Fisher's (Sat. Rev., June 7) caption at once strikes a note of shared, East-West feeling; uttered by an Easterner, it is a currently popular Western cliché: "I'd hate to be President of the United States - they say it's too big a job for one man". The implied feeling of East-West community is perhaps enhanced by the general, if not the specific sexual implications in the content of the cartoon; two stout men in stereotyped, Eastern-potentate garb are lounging on a couch surrounded by numerous, slim, veiled women who are standing, lying or playing musical instruments. An East-West difference in sexual practice, if not in fantasy, is thus intro-

duced against an implied general interest in sex; the difference is suggested by the large ratio of women to men and the caption's implication that the Easterner does not consider all these women "too big a job" even if he so regards the American presidency. One might also say that this cartoon expresses some concern about East-West differences while making the hypothetical, associated anxiety more tolerable partly by the device of emphasizing only those differences which concern internationally non-crucial, domestic affairs and partly by de-emphasizing, even denying, those differences which concern such internationally more critical issues as the role played by the American president. Existing anxiety might be even further minimized by the hint that such Eastern power as may exist is at the possibly enviable, but not immediately dangerous, sexual-domestic level.

The double-entendre approach is used to focus attention also on relatively trivial rather than important East-West differences in two cartoons by Hollowood. Thus, Hollowood (Punch, July 23) shows a rather stereotyped American sergeant, chest out and cigarette in his mouth, walking by as if unaware of the following remark by one of two Eastern bystanders in fez and loose-fitting clothes: "And another thing about these infidels - they smoke Camels". Hollowood's (Punch, July 30) cartoon shows an American sergeant equipped with dark glasses and cigarette; he is scowling at a hammer-and-sickle emblem drawn on an adjacent wall. An Easterner, in fez and loose-fitting garment soberly points to the hammer and sickle and reassures the sergeant and presumably also the cartoonist's audience: "No, sir, it means G.I. - a 'G' crossed with an 'I'."

Brockbank's (Punch, July 23) cartoon focusses attention perhaps less comfortably for the British, if not the Americans, on Jordan instead of on Lebanon but only as part of the total Mid-East scene. In it, a moustached, balding, and sober man in striped trousers, attaché case in hand, is addressing a woman who looks up from a pool of lamplight and holds a newspaper on which the words, "Iraq", "Jordan", and "Egypt", are discernible at intervals, in large type. The

comical, gossipy, wishfully buck-passing nature of his remark, compared with the serious, global implications of the Mid-East crisis to which he refers, seems to express, channel, and partially control potentially attendant anxiety: "There's a persistent rumour in Fleet Street that the whole thing was sparked off by Glub Pasha's literary agent".

II. The second topic concerns America's apparent consternation, following Sputnik, about Russian scientific competence, particularly as shown by the much-publicized American effort to reach the moon before Russia. Of the many cartoons dealing with this subject, none seems even to hint at the possible failure of this American effort. Instead, most cartoons imply that the moon has already been reached and go on from there. Usually, too, they do not even raise the question of American versus Russian priority, as if it might perhaps be taken for granted. However, all is not smooth sailing; in fact, the humorous element in most of the "moon" cartoons seems to derive from the notion that surprise or even danger may greet the otherwise omnipotent, American space traveller once he arrives on the moon. Thus, one might say that, once scientific superiority to the Russians has been gratifyingly established, the now-more-tolerable and realistic notion of American vulnerability is introduced so quickly as to invite laughter at the sudden contrast.

One example of these cartoons is that by Stevenson (N. Y., June 7) which shows two men standing in rather desolate surroundings at the foot of a ladder from what seems to be their recently-landed rocket ship. Dressed in what might well be space suits and helmets, they are being attacked from behind and in front by half-human looking creatures who seem to be propelled through the air by jet-like power from mysterious gadgets strapped around their waists; their weapons, however, look like antiquated bows and arrows and several of the latter lie around the travellers as if they have glanced off them. One traveller ruefully regards his companion who is busy watching the attackers; his remark seems to sum up their joint situation, both literally and figuratively:



"It appears to me that they're ahead of us in some ways, behind us in others".

Addams' bright red and yellow cartoon on the New Yorker cover (June 14) shows a man in what seems to be a space suit with antenna-equipped helmet, against a background of craggy cliff-dwellings and a distantly revolving "earth". The man is lying on his back with half-raised head; his body and arms are held flat and rigid by means of numerous tiny strings which are wrapped around him and then pegged to the ground. Hundreds of tiny creatures which look like insects are running about and on him; some are carrying tiny swords and shields while some are still adjusting the strings attached to him. He is apparently a modern Gulliver in some Lilliputian moon world; though ingenious enough to have got there, he is now helpless, in the "quick-change" tradition previously mentioned as characterizing the moon cartoons.

Redini's (N.Y., June 28) cartoon also portrays surprises on the moon. In it, two men who look somewhat startled, are emerging from their rocket ships dressed in space suits and helmets. They seem to be on the moon judging from the fact that a large "earth" and several "planets" hang in the distant sky above nearby, jagged and desolate hills. The travellers are looking down the ship's ladder, which they have begun to descend, toward a human figure; dressed like themselves and running toward them with one hand raised in salute, he leaves footsteps behind him on what seems to be snow. The man's forelock and moustache suggests that he is none other than Hitler; perhaps, even so, he is a more welcome sight than any Russian predecessor, however benign.

Lorenz's (N.Y., Aug. 16) variation on a similar theme also shows two men clothed in space suits and helmets emerging from what is presumably a space ship. The usual, distant "earth and planets" and more local, jagged and desolate hills may be seen in the background suggesting that the travellers have reached the moon; as they pause at the top of their ship's gangplank, they see with apparent dismay a human figure standing below them. The man wears a long



white beard and an old-fashioned pilot's suit; he is smiling and has raised both hands in apparently enthusiastic greeting. His footsteps lead back through the snow to an old-fashioned plane but despite his obviously prior arrival, he speaks to them in undoubtedly welcome English: "Thank God! I'd given up hope."

As was previously mentioned, the "moon" cartoons usually seem to ignore the possibility of American failure to reach the moon. However, Ross's (Sat. Rev., June 21) cartoon raises the question of a possibly close race with the Russians in doing so. Against the now familiar moon "sky", of distant "earth" and "planets", Ross draws two rocket ships. One is large and in the foreground; the other is some distance away. A disembarked pair of travellers, dressed in space suits and helmets, can be seen in front of each ship; the crew of the nearer ship are clean shaven, look rather American, and are walking about. From the fact that they are not looking around but only at the other crew, it seems that they are already oriented to the moon. The farther crew, however, are standing still, looking about and pointing into the distance as if still orienting themselves to a new place; they wear long, dark beards and do not apparently notice the men in the foreground. One of the latter speaks to his companion: "It's the Russians. Make believe you don't see them." This exaggerated note of competitiveness and recourse to wishful thinking, even in the imaginary context of having defeated the Russians in the race for the moon and of presumably having no other sources of companionship in such a remote spot, might humorously express a more general concern for somewhat more earthbound, American behavior of the "Make believe you don't see them" variety.

III. On the third, general topic, the business slump, there are numerous cartoons. That these reflect anxious pre-occupation with the subject of the recession and some tendency to provide a defense against it is suggested by the fact that these cartoons tend to focus on recession "remedies", especially, perhaps somewhat philosophically, on one already much advocated by government and business leaders. Thus,

they often show comically exaggerated, usually successful, efforts to stimulate sales in the allegedly critical, automobile business. The effect is to evoke a pleasing, albeit playful, fantasy that, without recourse to more complicated political or economic manoeuvres, the business slump will simply yield to the car salesman's persistent effort to sell cars. If he succeeds, it will be to his greater profit, the public's greater enjoyment, and above all to the benefit of the national economy. The hint behind the humor that this hope may be exaggerated is presumably made less alarming by the flattering implication that only the cartoonist and his audience see through such illusions.

An example of cartoons which represent the notion, that car sales and national prosperity may be identical, is Ritita's (N.Y., June 28). Here, two men, apparently manager and salesman, are conversing in the centre of a large lot; it is crowded with automobiles and equipped with neon lights as if to suggest night-and-day activity. In the centre, is a flag-pole toward which the manager is pointing as he says: "Well, Jackson, we're ready for another day. Run up Old Glory."

Next, Tobey (N.Y., July 19) suggests that even the church, perhaps more appropriately, subscribes to the notion that car sales and national salvation are identical. He draws a typical, car-salesroom display window, complete with the latest car models; at the door, a man is lounging beneath the sign, "Hoyt Motors". Cigarette in his mouth, flower in his buttonhole, he seems ready for action but nevertheless idle and downcast. A minister in traditional garb is walking by and addresses him, encouragingly: "I've been praying for you, Hoyt."

Day's (N.Y., July 5) cartoon represents the more cheerful as well as the latently more ironic cartoons in this group. Against a background of shiny cars, potted palm, the sign "Ideal Auto Sales and Service", and two broadly-smiling assistants, a cheerful, spic-and-span salesman is clasping what seems to be a check while also vigorously shaking the hand of an apparently pleased and paid-up customer who is smiling with quite remarkable smugness. The caption is: "I thank

you, sir; the automotive industry thanks you; the United Auto Workers thank you; our government thanks you; and all men everywhere throughout this great land of ours thank you."

Superficially more conducive to evoking, than reducing, anxiety about the car-sales approach to combatting the recession is Stantler's (Sat. Rev., June 21) cartoon. In it, a man and woman are walking out of a car salesroom which is equipped with new cars and decorated liberally with potted palms. A rather crestfallen salesman is confiding to a surprised-looking colleague, as they watch the couple walk away: "You know, I think he was ready to pull out his checkbook when I pulled that 'You Auto Buy Now' slogan on him." It is interesting that, beneath its somewhat inconoclastic surface, this cartoon cheerfully implies that auto sales, and hence the economy, might well take care of themselves if the current methods of "artificial respiration" were given up. In other words, the cartoonist seems to assume that the supposed business slump is either imaginary or over.

Typical of the few cartoons in this group which focus on recession remedies, other than those associated with selling cars, is that of Mathews (Sat. Rev., June 28). In it, a sleeping man is wearing earphones which are attached to a bedside machine, equipped with tapes. The caption reads: "There is no recession, it's all in the minds of the people. There is no recession . . ." One might suppose that, while expressing concern about the recession, this cartoon also provides reassurance about it, however illusory. Thus, it represents in comically exaggerated form the comforting thesis, already expounded by certain political and business leaders, that psychological factors, easy to manipulate, have caused and therefore may also provide an easy cure for the recession.

Focussing on the business slump without attention to cheering remedies, perhaps because, more reassuringly, they minimize the extent of the slump and make remedies seem unnecessary are a few cartoons such as that of C. Lane (N.Y., June 14). In it, nine golfers, in various positions and with paunches of differing size, watch a tenth man tee off while

they wait their turn. They look rather restive and disgruntled especially one man in the foreground who stands under a sign, "Please stay in line". He is saying: "Business must really be on the skids. This is the longest we've ever had to wait on a week day." For one of these apparently well-fed and week-day golfers to assess the seriousness of the recession only in such "luxury" terms as how much it slows down his daily golf, seems to make the alleged slump reassuringly minimal, non-existent, or merely a matter for joking.

In conclusion, the attempt has been made in this paper informally to test Kris's hypothesis that the comic may be used as a defense, "to ward off emotions, above all anxiety." It was assumed that, if Kris's thesis were correct, it should be relatively easy to locate humorous cartoons bearing upon topics probably anxiety-provoking to Americans and to recognize in them defensive functions. The topics selected were: first, American foreign relations in general, but particularly relations with Russia regarding a proposed summit conference and concerning the Middle East; second, the revelation by Sputnik of unsuspected, Russian scientific competence with ensuing American eagerness to surpass Russia, particularly by reaching the moon first; and third, the so-called business recession and resultant preoccupation with assessing and combatting it. Humorous cartoons related to these topics were sought in the 1958 spring and especially the summer issues of *The New Yorker*, *Punch*, and *The Saturday Review*, magazines chosen because of their apparently general acceptance as publishers of humorous cartoons. In relatively few issues of the magazines in question, numerous cartoons bearing on the chosen topics were located. Representative cartoons were described and trends discussed. The attempt to identify possibly anxiety-expressive and anxiety-reducing cartoon features seemed to be successful, thus providing support for Kris's previously mentioned hypothesis. No attempt was made to describe, discuss, or test other hypotheses about

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cartoons, caricature, comedy or humor or to review the relevant literature.

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# Psychopathological Characters in Current Drama\*

## A Study of a Trio of Heroines

by

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In 1942, a man of the theater and arts made public Freud's paper, "Psychopathological Characters on Stage" (8), which was written in 1904. In an accompanying essay Max Graf (9) says of the paper, "Freud gave it to me and I now submit it to a world in which the ideas of Freud have become part of the spiritual air we breathe."

In the same period of the early 1940's, a young playwright appeared on the scene with acclaimed creative gifts, particularly in the direction of portraying psychopathological character. Thus, in this period, the world became familiar with Tennessee Williams' play, "The Glass Menagerie" and shortly thereafter with the now famous character portrayal of Blanche du Bois in "A Streetcar Named Desire" (15) (16).

Much has been said of our current period to the effect that Freud's psychoanalysis has cast a parental heritage upon us in the areas of psychosomatic medicine, psychology, anthropology, sociology, education, and the arts. Our interest here will be in the field of current theatre. Only in passing it might be commented that a predominant preoccupation with portraying the mentally ill exists in all the scripts of movies, radio, television, as well as theatre. Leaving aside the issue of the frequent lack of creativeness that is apparent in the

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\*This paper is part of a longer study on several outstanding creative personalities in modern drama, in which their lives or their works or both are psychoanalytically studied from the viewpoint of creative imagination (13) (14) (15). Presented at the Annual Meeting of The American Psychoanalytic Association in New York City, Dec. 7, 1957.



communications in the guise of an art form, there is to be noted that the preoccupation with matters related to the mentally ill is the common interest of writer and public. Deftly or ineptly done, it is a universal attitude of writers and public that the mentally ill on stage must be loved and understood, sympathized with and treated by competent, sincere physicians. Their motivations must be uncovered, their early childhood experiences must be explained. In such a state of affairs, Graf's statement that the "ideas of Freud have become part of the spiritual air we breathe" becomes well documented. One gets the impression that a statistical survey of the dramatic scripts, at least since the early 1940's, would reveal a majority representation of portrayals of psychopathic characters, enhanced and embroidered in pseudo-analytic understanding and treatment.

In his paper, Freud comments on the psychopathological drama as follows: "It appears to be one of the prerequisites of this art form that the struggle of the repressed impulse to become conscious, recognizable though it is, is so little given a definite name that the process of reaching consciousness goes on in turn within the spectator while his attention is distracted and he is in the grip of his emotions, rather than capable of rational judgment." It might be commented that if our dramatists of today would fulfill this minimum prerequisite, the goal of true art would be much more in sight for the multitude of endeavors.

In current drama (plays, movies and television), there is a preponderance of psychopathic character which, more frequently than not is "useless for the stage" (8). The major reason for this is that the unfolding of the character's repressed impulses are more than recognizable and more often than not are given overspecific enactments in the drama in the forms of sexual love for the opposite parent or sibling, death wishes for the parent of the same sex, homosexuality, etc. This approach is to be compared to the sterility of intellectualized pseudo-insight in analysis. Such dramatizations only reach the intellectualized insight of the audience.

Therefore, communication between the stage characters and audience will be vacuous.

Freud then recommends that the character in psychopathological dramas reveal the struggle of unconscious impulses towards consciousness in an ambiguous form. He emphasized the essential nature of ambiguity in this art form. Kris and Kaplan (11), expanding on Empson's essay on ambiguity in poetic language (7) develop the conception of art "as a process of communication and recreation in which ambiguity plays a central role". Thus we have brought together analytic observations in psychopathological drama and in the use of poetic language and in art in general. This may be particularly fruitful since Tennessee Williams is both poet and dramatist. His plays, even when not written in verse, are essentially regarded as approaches to character by way of poetic revelation.

As we proceed, we intend to focus on the aspect of his character creations, when we are suddenly and simultaneously surrounded by the effects of his poetic language. It is self-evident that this actually expresses the higher levels of any artistic creation.

This transcendency from one art form to another is so structured in Williams' creations that it is possible to view him as the Toulouse-Lautrec of New Orleans. His studies of prostitutes and derelicts in his one-act plays, "Hello from Bertha" and "The Lady of the Larkspur Lotion" are so empathically ingrained and perceptively portrayed that one is reminded of the great impressionist painter's unrivalled studies of similar characters in the music halls of Paris at the turn of the century.

Another aspect of apartness from the general current of psychopathological drama to be noted in Williams is his uncompromising completeness of portrayal. Williams' characters are not always favorably responded to by audiences. However, there is rarely a lack of emotional response in either his critics or supporters. There is also rarely a moment in the unfolding of his plays that permits the return of our rational judgment. Perhaps this can be compared to the way the gen-

eral public only likes and in some cases only understands a mild caricature of analysis and often shows its unhidden hostility and hidden fears of its real representation.

This study will occupy itself with the considerations mainly of three plays for the purposes indicated in our title, although other plays might be mentioned in passing.

We are indebted to Williams for a most unusual portrayal of a thirteen year old girl from a small Mississippi town, who is a juvenile derelict. In this one-act play, "This Property is Condemned", the young girl, Willie, is seen in a setting where she lives secretively alone in her formerly condemned house from which her mother deserted by running off with a railroad man, one of many who frequented her combined home and house of prostitution. The servicing prostitutes are Willie's mother and her hero-worshipped older sister, Alva. Her alcoholic father disappeared shortly after the mother had left. Willie lived with Alva until Alva developed tuberculosis and died.

Thus Willie sees her sister Alva as a successful social female with many admirers who call upon her and shower her with gifts. It is to be noted in Williams' characterization of deserted or deprived or depraved females that they seek both solace and sanction in fantasies that reconstruct their current or former activities into the ideal of the pretty Southern belle who has many young, handsome and wealthy admirers. Likewise, in "Hello from Bertha", the prostitute, Bertha, who is suffering from a venereal tubal infection, clings to her affair with Charlie Aldrich, the hardware man from Memphis, with a fantasy in which he is an ever-loving figure who will rescue her from her plight. In "The Lady of Larkspur Lotion", the dyed blonde, forty year old, alcoholically delusioned prostitute who calls herself Mrs. Hardwick-Moore, cannot pay her room rent in the French Quarter. Defensively and delusionally she demands that her landlady rid the place of roaches and haughtily explains that there has been a delay in the quarterly payment which she receives from the man who takes care of her Brazilian rubber plantation.

Running through the heroines of Williams' plays, the

admixture of prostitute and prostitute fantasy is always present with artistic ambiguity, as are pride and poverty, social achievement and ostracism, and finally, reality and fantasy.

It is noteworthy that actresses who have played Williams' heroines have often transformed their latent talents into performances of great achievements and great recognition. In many cases, the already accomplished actress seems to have added immeasurably to her status via the role of a Williams heroine.

In reading Williams' plays, one is impressed with the thorough integrative ambiguity that is elaborated in the psychopathological heroine and the similar thoroughness of stringencies that is assigned to the same role via aspects of their personal characteristics. Thus Blanche du Bois is constantly contained in a portrayal of an exhibitionistic woman concerned with her appearance and clothes, and when she is seen and not seen. The heroine here is at each moment entrenched in the eyes of the author, the other actors, herself and the audience as a woman who is looked at in every variation and vicissitude of this drive. To be looked at in admiration of beauty, or in despair of waning youth, or in the brutality of daylight, in the kindness of night, or in the evanescence of jaded jewelry and summer frock is to be Blanche du Bois.

Beyond this clear-cut identity of Blanche du Bois which makes her always believable and enactable, we must seek out Blanche, in the deepest depiction of her inner conflicts and of her failing social adjustment and of her final tragedy. Frequently Williams' heroines meet the poignant pressure of unconscious strivings and catastrophic realities with a delusional denial of reality, as is demonstrated in the above mentioned "Lady of Larkspur Lotion" who awaits the harvest of her Brazilian rubber plantation. The characters' delusional denials become a part of Williams' inspiration point of departure as they regress into created fantasies of poetic ambiguity that are either spoken or enacted. This characters weave fantasies that unburden the momentary crisis, transform narcissistic injury to painless gratification, and devise

schemes of secure eternities.

But what are Blanche du Bois' repressed wishes, ego capacities, superego struggles, ego ideals and her total adaptive adjustment? Where does she fit in our frail filing fences of neurosis and psychosis? Williams approaches these questions in his stage direction when he refers to her as a neurasthenic personality. How much beyond Williams' own description we can carry this is a question. The methodology employed in the analysis of a created character cannot be as satisfactory as when employed in psychoanalysis. For one thing, we cannot ask these characters, or even the author, to free associate. Nor can we remove their resistances and analyze their defenses. There is no next moment when more of the unconscious can then be made available. We also have to deal with the limited historical material that the author has made available to us in a single session. It is particularly interesting that Williams' characters never relate much of their early childhood. Their lives seem to begin for them mainly in early adolescence, more rarely in puberty. The contents of infancy and latency are well sealed. This may have a strong correlation to the credibility of their dramatic and colorful episodes of acting out.

Another difficulty confronting the analyst trying to "psychoanalyze" the created character is that the usual procedure tends to reduce the creation to a more or less single ambiguity. This is redundant to the essence of creativity which, according to Kris, should be a cluster of multiple integrative ambiguities. We must bear in mind that the attempt to reduce creative material which shows preconscious elements to a specific unconscious meaning is to partake of the responses of any ordinary member of an audience who comes away from an artistic creation with a "personal" message. The difference is only that this limited use of special knowledge is more noticable than it is crucial.

Following the direction of the drama's plot, we might conclude that Blanche du Bois has unresolved oedipal wishes which culminate in her enactment of a single impulsive relationship with her brother-in-law, Stanley, and subsequently

results in her complete breakdown and abandonment as punishment for the direct fulfillment of this wish. We could then account for her promiscuity as disguised but consciously enacted repetitions of the same wish. We can also state that her early abortive tragic marriage to a suicidal homosexual and her desperate attempts to retain the family plantation which she states was ruined "as piece by piece our improvident grandfathers and father and uncles and brothers exchanged the land for their epic fornication - to put it plainly", and finally her inability subsequently to establish a functioning marriage like her sister Stella - all these facts seem further data as variations of her unresolved oedipal situation. We might also conclude that genitality has been surrendered and reduced to exhibitionism which became the functioning levels of her gratification, her anxieties and concerns and her phobic symptoms in which she never goes out in daylight and permits herself to be seen in full light. We subject these formulations to the criticism that they are not to be substantiated by infantile data and that they are derivatives of artificial personification. The truer personification of the character is attached to the creative ego of the author. Kris states, "Central to artistic or indeed any other - creation, is a relaxation (regression) of ego function". Hence, something from the author's unconscious is represented in the inspirational state of the ego.

Therefore, an alternative methodological approach suggests itself. Since a created character originally belongs to the inspired and, necessarily regressed ego of the author, we might examine other inspirational emanations (in this case, other characters from other plays) and search for common unconscious denominators. We have already demonstrated that Blanche, of "A Streetcar Named Desire", has in common with the girl Willie of "This Property is Condemned" and Mrs. Hardwick-Moore of "The Lady of Larkspur Lotion" an identical major defense mechanism - the delusional denial of reality and inner conflicts. This hints at the idea that little Willie, Blanche and Mrs. Hardwick-Moore are derivatives of a single unconscious image in the author's un-



conscious. As we look into this, we note that our trio of heroines have further in common a complete state of abandonment by friends and family; they are equally preoccupied and confronted with their lost home and property. For the little girl Willie, it is her condemned home to which she clings desperately; for Blanche it is the lost battle for her plantation called Belle Reve; and for the deluded, disoriented Mrs. Hardwick-Moore, it is her Brazilian rubber plantation which is a mile away from the Mediterranean and from which, on a clear day, it was possible to distinguish the white chalk cliffs of Dover - to this delusional home she adheres with the greatest tenacity. To the growing bond of our trio, we might add the mutuality of their promiscuity and prostitution. To little Willie the future of having many gentlemen callers who will wine her, dine her and be with her through the night, is the heritage from her sister Alva. In a welcome ambiguity we are never certain whether Willie already has filled the gap of Alva as we are simultaneously uncertain regarding her knowledge of the sexual act itself. But Willie definitely tells us that the men who visited her mother and sister's house were important guests, to be respected for their achievements in life. Blanche's promiscuity is portrayed in pictures of prostitution. Her repeated intimacies with strangers in a cheap, disreputable hotel and the clamoring cries of the drunken soldiers from the nearby training camps on a Saturday night for Blanche, to which she responded in this fashion:

"I slipped out to answer their calls - later the paddy-wagon would gather them up like daisies - the long way home."

To the Larkspur Lotion lady, prostitution was a long established profession. She deludes herself into the identity of a titled lady with a second-hand coat of arms and who denied that she has male visitors with whom she quarrels over money for her services. Finally, our three heroines have a common fantasy of being rescued by the well to do admirer. For Willie, it is the freight superintendent, Mr. Johnson, "The most important character we ever had in our rooming house",



with whom she goes out steady and who buys her fancy shoes and corsages and takes her dancing every night. For Blanche du Bois, it is Shep Huntleigh, the college boy friend who now owns oil wells in Texas - who at the height of her breakdown and homelessness she fantasies has come to rescue her. For Mrs. Hardwick-Moore it is the rubber king from the plantation.

With only the minimal sacrifice of creative reality it is possible to see the thirteen year old Willie grown into the thirty year old Blanche du Bois whom we have last seen ejected from her last refuge and institutionalized, emerging in a final scene of deterioration and hopelessness ten years later and older as Mrs. Hardwick-Moore, whose Belle Reve plantation becomes a Brazilian rubber plantation, whose oil king becomes a rubber king and whose prostitutional promiscuity has become a dismal reality.

Psychoanalytic literature also tends to coalesce its understanding of promiscuity and fantasies of prostitution. Prostitution itself, as an institution, so to speak, has not been commented upon. However, it could be said that since fantasies are often enacted, we would find within the profession of prostitutes a group who are enacting that which belongs to fantasy life. It is not assumed that all prostitutes arrive at this occupation via the direction of their fantasy life. Environmental, cultural and economic factors seem to play a role as well. However, the one patient whom I treated who was a prostitute for a short period of her life, had enacted an integral part of her fantasy life. In analytic literature, promiscuity and prostitution are said to be related to early or severely repressed penis envy which gives rise to character traits of masculinity or vengeance towards men. Both traits give rise to fantasies of prostitution and the vengeful type is related to promiscuity (1).

In Blanche du Bois, her final relationship with her brother-in-law, Stanley, has the quality of "because you have despised me, I'll make you admire what you have despised", as described by Fenichel (p. 494). However, little else in the elaboration of Blanche, or Willie, or Mrs. Hardwick-

Moore hints at an underlying problem of penis envy.

We prefer to study the promiscuity, prostitution and the prostitution fantasy in the given context - that related to these women clinging desperately to their childhood homes in their loneliness and fantasizing that they will be permanently rescued by a rich hero. Since analytic literature seems to be so meagre in this area, it is very possible that the study of creative imagery in a psychoanalytic way may support or offer some clues to our scientific data. Willie describes her condemned house with:

"We used to have some high old times in that big yellow house. Pianos, victrolas, Hawaiian steel guitars. Everyone played on something. But now - it's awful quiet."

She then states:

"Tell him - the freight superintendent has brought me a pair of kid slippers - patent. The same as the old ones of Alva's. I'm going to dances with them at Moon Lake Casino. All night I'll be dancing and come home drunk in the morning! We'll have serenades with all kinds of musical instruments. Trumpets an' trombones. An' Hawaiian steel guitars. Yeh heh! The sky will be white like this."

The young boy, Tom, asks her to expose herself as she had done for his friend Frank. Willie refusing, explains, "because I was lonesome then an' I'm not lonesome now. You can tell Frank Waters that." Willie thus demonstrates that her promiscuous enactments are related to her feelings of abandonment.

Stanley queries Blanche regarding her millionaire about whom she realistically weaves ways and means of her rescue.

Stanley: This millionaire from Dallas is not going to interfere with your privacy any?

Blanche: It won't be the sort of thing you have in mind. This man is a gentleman and he respects me. What he wants is my company. Having great wealth makes people lonely! A cultivated woman, a woman of intelligence and breeding can enrich a man's life immeasurably! Physical beauty is passing. A transitory possession. But beauty of the mind and richness of the spirit and tenderness of heart - and I

have all those things - aren't taken away, but grow! How strange that I should be called a destitute woman!"

Blanche explains her promiscuity to Mitch who wanted to marry her until he heard all about her. She confesses that her den of iniquity was a hotel called Tarantula Arms. She says:

"Yes, a big spider! That's where I brought my victims. (She pours herself another drink). Yes, I had many intimacies with strangers. After the death of Allan intimacies with strangers was all I seemed able to fill my empty heart with. . . . I think it was panic, just panic, that drove me from one to another, hunting for some protection - here and there in the most - unlikely places - even at last in a seventeen year old boy but - somebody wrote the superintendent about it - "This woman is morally unfit for her position!"

From the angry accompaniment of a confession transformed into the quality of a first understanding, Blanche reveals to herself and to us that her promiscuity pleaded to her intense panic and search for protection for a quieting solution. Blanche then tells Mitch the meaning of her wanting him:

"You said you needed somebody. Well, I need somebody too. I thanked God for you, because you seemed to be gentle - a cleft in the rock of the world that I could hide in."

In these poetic revelations, Blanche reveals the meaning of her promiscuity, her struggle for her home and her fantasies of being rescued to the unconscious content of intense fear of aloneness and abandonment and wishes to be incorporated into the mother.

At this point, consideration of my patient who temporarily became a prostitute, might be useful. She was a 29 year old, unmarried stenographer, from an orthodox Jewish family. She was considerably overwrought, over-talkative and over-dressed, with a tendency towards gaudiness and girlishness. Prior to her coming to me, she had been in a cultist type of therapy. She lived on the estate of this so-called therapist, with a group of other patients. In this setting she was both secretary to the therapist and a member of his

group therapy or group living of one sort or another. She had relations with him which were confined to fellatio which had some rationalization that it was therapeutic to her fantasies in this controlled situation. She came well fitted to this role. Upon her discharge from a state hospital after one and a half years, she decided not to return home but to make her own way. In her wanderings about town she was picked up by a young colored man with whom she established more of a liaison rather than a relationship, which in turn led to her becoming a member of a house of prostitution. In this occupation, she encouraged and accepted mostly the role of performing fellatio.

Actually, her not returning home had the meaning to her that she could not go home because of her sense of shame for having been institutionalized and that she was abandoned and rejected. Much in her mother's attitudes towards her was correctly interpreted by her as abandonment and rejection. This rejection was a re-enactment of a state of affairs which existed since the patient was eight. At that time, the patient began practically to live in the house of a married woman who befriended her. Regarding the endless time she spent there she was never questioned or disapproved of by her mother, who she felt completely rejected her to the extent that she was never disciplined or disapproved of for any straying away from home. This relationship with the befriending woman continued until the age of 17. This does not confine the state of rejection by her mother to the age of eight. The patient felt she was rejected from the beginning.

In a sketchy way, since created characters are our main interest, the abandonment and neglect, the loss of home and her struggles to attach herself to home and mother, first through a woman and then through the colored man and the house of prostitution, and finally the strange therapist and his group home, indicate her struggle to be rescued and to incorporate the mother via the masturbatory fantasies and acts of fellatio and promiscuity in which the penis is certainly equated with the breast. There is clearly a parallelism in unconscious content between our patient, Willie, Blanche and

Mrs. Hardwick-Moore, although our patient's life is perhaps less dramatic and colorful since the background of our scene is a tenement home in Brooklyn rather than a decaying plantation in Mississippi. Again, we lack analytic finality since this patient came in an acutely depressed state and was in need of shock treatment, so that history gathering and analytic understanding were minimally applied in this situation.

It is only retrospectively concluded, in view of the hints from our dramatic heroines that some significant connection existed between her abandonment, her loss of home (pre-oedipal mother) and the enactments of her masturbatory fantasies of promiscuity into a period of prostitution. What is usually considered a house of prostitution for this patient and perhaps many others in the same position is a home of prostitution.

What Williams has conveyed to us about such women in drama, Toulouse-Lautrec has portrayed in his paintings of the empathically considered courtesans and is confirmed in biographical studies of his life.

We can now place in juxtaposition the conclusion of our two methodological approaches. Before doing this, we offer the following criticisms of both conclusions. The conclusions reached are of necessity generalized constructions. Infantile material of the fictional character was not available for either approach. Also, the material studied was not correlated to the biography of the artist. This was not done since it would be both unethical and unavailable in this given instance. On the other hand, we would consider the conclusions of the second methodological approach more significant. On this score Beres (4) states "that a person reveals himself by the choice of language, by recurrent phrases, metaphors, images or themes, is a recognized fact in psychoanalytic practice and has also been noted by literary scholars."

Thus we favor the impression that we learn more of Blanche du Bois by studying her characteristics and her problems in common with Willie of "This Property is Condemned" and Mrs. Hardwick-Moore of "The Lady of the Larkspur Lotion" than we do by studying the story of

Blanche due Bois, the school teacher who has struggled unsuccessfully to maintain her family estate and has been evicted from her profession and community and finds her last refuge in the home of a younger sister's husband with whom she has an affair which terminates in her complete breakdown. From this history we concluded about Blanche's unresolved oedipal situation. Her promiscuity represents the intense expression of her oedipal wishes with disguised unconscious incestuous objects. Her regression to exhibitionism also enables her to enact oedipal wishes via a regressive instinctual displacement. Her fantasies of being rescued represent the wish for a powerful but desexualized father.

In contrast to this, the mutual study of the three women enables us to conclude that Blanche du Bois' fear of loneliness and abandonment are probably based on a disturbance of early object relationship in which she differs intensely from her sister Stella. This accounts for her incapacity to establish a permanent object relationship or for that matter, every relationship is but a transient negation in her search for an unattainable reunion with the pre-oedipal mother. Her promiscuity, her unending fantasies of being rescued and the inevitability of her final failure are further evidence of this state of affairs.

In this aspect of his portrayal, Williams communicates to us the message of his repeated unconsciously derived creations. The direction of the story itself is neither unique or original. The story is but the vehicle for the poetic, dramatic and deeper unconscious communication. As in the practice of analysis, the presence of the ubiquitous and often pathological oedipal solution is rarely the essential therapeutic solution for any given individual. Eidelberg (6), in a recent case, demonstrated the unalterable quality of an analysis which dealt meticulously and classically with every aspect of phallic, anal and oral factors until finally some specific pre-oral determinants were uncovered which became crucial to the success of therapy.

Agoston's (2) study reveals some interesting correlation between our applied studies and his observations. He de-



scribes most prominently the pseudo-personality of the prostitute which involves the denial of identity to escape feelings of guilt. This is extended into telling fictitious personal tales. Helene Deutsch (5) has pointed out the convincing pseudologia of her prostitute patient, Anna. One can readily recall the dramatic delusional denials of Willie, Blanche and Mrs. Hardwick-Moore. Agoston then points out that in all cases there is an unresolved Eodipus complex and a "complete emotional rejection by both parents, usually in actual fact, with a partial element of fantasy. Concomitantly there is pseudo-regression to the oral/anal level in the guise of money-madness which conceals regression to the completely infantile level of exhibitionism, scotophilia and enjoyment of magic power."

Our study of Blanche's story through the plot of the play clearly demonstrated the unresolved oedipal situation and her regression to exhibitionism. The study of the triad of prostitutional heroines via their introspective and self-descriptive utterances completely illustrates not only regression and the rejection by parents, but the additional disturbance in object relationships with the concomitant fears of abandonment and the restitutional fantasies of being rescued by men, which represents being reunited with the pre-oedipal mother. Thus, this study tends not only to confirm previous clinical findings in the psychology of prostitutes, but tends to extend the understanding into more basic aspects of ego development and the nature of the object relationships in such cases. Accordingly, our two methodological approaches, i.e., the comprehending of the events in the plays and studying of the fusion of the author's identical characters gives us both a longitudinal and depth perspective in our analytic evaluation.

It would be circumspect and limited to view Williams' (15) "A Streetcar Named Desire", and indeed the other plays mentioned, as exclusively psychopathological dramas. Freud, in this 1904 paper, classified drama into religious, character, social, psychological and psychopathological categories. He writes, "Every combination of this situation with that in the earlier types of drama, that is the social and the



character drama, is of course possible insofar as social institutions evoke just such an inner conflict, and so on." Thus Blanche du Bois' struggle against Stanley and the social community becomes the enactment of a character drama and a social tragedy.

In the field of applied psychoanalysis are many technical pitfalls and limitations of available sources and resources which block the road to the ultimate psychoanalytic goal - the study of imagination. It would appear at first glance that the happy combination of the study of the creations that are repetitively unconsciously determined and the study of an analytically complete biography of the creator, properly correlated, give us the most scientific and accurate construction and interpretation.

In this connection, Beres, in his studies of methodology of biography of the artist states, "It is not necessary to assume that in every instance an actual experience is the source of the artist's creation. I refer to the capacity of an artist to identify and empathize with different emotional states and experiences which he need not have gone through. This capacity to identify with another's experience may be a primary requisite for any true artist, an essential component of his personality and a measure of his greatness."

This conclusion may turn out to be the most valid reason for studying psychoanalytically the biography of an artist. Perhaps then to discover a separateness between the creation and the artist's actual personal experience may prove to be a stamp of the greater artist. This may explain the often noted phenomenon of the failure of an artist to repeat the promise of a great creation of a single work. The resultant successful product may have had more to do with an intense personal experience than with the artist's inherent creativeness. It is a question whether the difficulties in the psychoanalytic biographical studies of Shakespeare are really due to the obscurities of his person, or rather due to the obscure relatedness of his characters to his own person. Kris (11), in his study of Prince Hal, states that Shakespeare's capacity to imagine conflicts may far "traverse the range of his own experience."

In the case of Tennessee Williams, the wide range of his plays, beginning with "The Glass Menagerie," "A Streetcar Named Desire," "Rose Tattoo," "Camino Real," "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" and many others, are not likely to be the contents of his personal experiences. At least, his own commentaries and essays never comment on the aspect of any play being part of a personal experience.

A well known critic (3) writes, "Mr. Williams is a gifted writer, he can vitalize the theatre with whatever theme he may be developing. Mr. Williams has ventured far afield since 1945, using the stage with greater virtuosity, developing power, mastering bigger canvasses". Again we note the description of Williams in terms of another medium - the painter. This same critic then continues to say that it is merely a matter of what Williams chooses to elaborate. At this point we take issue. Our conclusions indicate that such choices are not consciously determined.

Like other artists, Williams may be able to evoke the primary process and a controlled ego regression for the purpose of creative writing, but he is bound by the unconsciously determined nature of his characterizations. Only in that way Freud's requisite of the obscure revelation of the repressed impulse and Kris' requisite of aesthetic ambiguity can be met. Perhaps with such unconscious images, Williams is constricted to the helpless future of continuing to write tragedies about psychopathological characters which the public may or may not like.

It is my impression that Williams' creative talent has directed itself to itself to its overdetermined path of portraying psychopathological characters. To substantiate such an impression, a biographical analysis would be the minimal requirement. The superior quality of these creations are of direct interest to us as students of mental illness. They may perhaps provide us with ways and means of analytically understanding a type of psychopathology that is rarely seen on the analyst's couch.

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# Metaphor and Mind

## *A Re-evaluation of Metaphor Theory\**

by

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### **Introduction**

Psychiatrists have become increasingly aware of the necessity for a more precise understanding of the communications which occur in the psychotherapeutic process. Many clinical observations suggest that the affect and content of one's past and present life problems may in part be communicated by metaphor. The study on which the present paper is based attempts an evaluation of metaphor as encountered in the course of individual psychotherapy. A more precise formulation of metaphor theory should enhance the psychiatrist's perception of his patient's attempts at communication. Therefore, this paper will suggest a preliminary psychodynamic interpretation of metaphor.

### **Terminology**

The multiplicity of definition reflects the confusion shrouding the subject of metaphor. This was noted by Campbell (4) who stressed how scholars vary in opinion as to what constitutes metaphor. Despite these disagreements it is generally accepted that metaphor is composed of a "figurative expression" and a "literal meaning". For example, in the metaphor "The clouds are crying" the figurative expression is "clouds are crying" and the literal meaning is that it is raining. The idea of falling water serves to connect

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the figurative expression and literal meaning so that one can substitute for, and be used to express, the other.

It is convenient to distinguish metaphor from simile and symbolism. Webster (13) defines metaphor as "A figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another by way of suggesting a likeness or analogy between them (e.g. the ship plows the sea; a volley of oaths)." On the other hand, simile involves an explicit comparison of one entity with another by using the terms "as" or "like". Symbolism and metaphor are both forms of indirect representation. In symbolism there is a symbol and an object symbolized. Similarly, in metaphor there is a figurative expression and a literal meaning. A basic difference is that metaphor is a use of language whereas a symbol is not. In addition, a metaphor need not fulfill the criteria of a true symbol which were proposed by Jones. (8)

To facilitate the reading of this paper the definition of metaphor used will be given in advance of the data from which it was abstracted. A metaphor is defined as a figure of speech in which a word or phrase expresses coexistent thoughts which are associatively connected, at least one of which may be unconscious and therefore less apparent. The "coexistent thoughts" will be called "tenor" and "vehicle". These are terms which are commonly used in the literature on metaphor. The tenor will be defined as "the literal meaning" and the vehicle "the figurative expression". For example, in the metaphor "The clouds are crying" the tenor is rain and the vehicle is "clouds are crying".

### History

The concentrated study of metaphor began with Aristotle (1, 2) in the fourth century, B. C. His interest in the crafts of writing led him to record, "The merit of diction is to be clear and not commonplace(2)." For those who would avoid the commonplace and provide a dignified quality to literary style, Aristotle proposed the use of metaphor. He believed that resemblances between the figurative expression and the literal meaning formed the basis for construction of

a metaphor. Aristotle cautioned that excessive use of metaphor would result in riddle.

In the year 55 B. C. Cicero (5) observed that metaphor was of prime importance in the "decoration and embellishment" of literary style. Like Aristotle he emphasized the basic principle of resemblance and the dangers of obscurity through riddle construction. In addition, Cicero concerned himself with the source of pleasure issuing from the use of metaphor. As an explanation of this affective experience, he emphasized that a good metaphor involves a direct appeal to the senses, and especially to the sense of sight. Cicero shared the concern of Demetrius (6) and Longinus (9) in warning that metaphor must not appear too harsh, often requiring a word of introduction to soften its effect. He even proposed that metaphor should have an "apologetic air".

In summary, certain generalizations seem to characterize the Greco-Roman approach to metaphor:

- (1) Metaphor was studied because of an interest in literary style.
- (2) Resemblance of tenor and vehicle was considered the basis for a metaphor.
- (3) Repeated cautioning reflected a general belief that the unrestricted use of metaphor was to be feared.
- (4) Ornamentation of language was accepted as the main function of metaphor.
- (5) The colloquial use of metaphor was largely ignored.

In the 18th century the discovery of Sanskrit with its apparent kinship to European tongues stimulated changes in the approach to language. Stanford (12) wrote "... colloquial speech received its due at last in the investigation of the origins and workings of language, and, incidentally, of metaphor." He also argued that the construction of metaphor must be intentional. This emphasis, that metaphor must be consciously intended, is not supported, but is contradicted by the data and the argument of this paper.

Max Black (3) recently outlined three general views which attempt an understanding of metaphor.

- (1) The substitution view. This view "... holds

that a metaphorical expression is used in place of some equivalent literal expression." This was the prevalent view of ancient rhetoricians. Thus, "The clouds are crying", is merely a decorative way of expressing its equivalent "it is raining".

(2) The comparison view. "If a writer holds that a metaphor consists in the presentation of the underlying analogy or similarity, he will be taking what I shall call a comparison view of metaphor." Here the vehicle is either similar in meaning, or analogous to, the tenor. The vehicle and tenor are no longer literal equivalents as in the substitution view. Again using the phrase "The clouds are crying", note that this is similar to saying "it is raining".

(3) The interaction view. Richards (10) described this view as follows: "When we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction". The reader is forced simultaneously to consider the tenor and vehicle which then intermix and result in a new meaning. For example, "The clouds are crying" would intermix with "it is raining". Considered together, a tearful response to the dreary weather might be communicated.

Ernest Jones (8) distinguished between metaphor and symbol in his paper on symbolism. His emphasis upon analogy in metaphor indicates his preference for a comparison view. This is supported by his comment: "The simile is the first stage of the metaphor". Jones pictures the metaphor as the "weakest form" of indirect representation. His denial of the significance of unconscious forces in metaphor is expressed in his writing, "If the regression proceeds only a certain distance, remaining conscious or at most pre-conscious, the result is metaphorical —".

E. Freeman Sharpe (11) has attempted to define the evolution of metaphor. She observed " . . . that metaphor can only evolve in language or in the arts when the bodily orifices become controlled." Pertinent to her hypothesis is acceptance of the formulation that words may become substitutes for bodily discharges and that speech becomes a way of ex-



pressing, discharging ideas. Sharpe presents many examples which make her thesis quite convincing. Implicit in her theory is the importance of unconscious processes in metaphor.

The generalizations which characterize the contemporary approach include:

- (1) A multi-disciplined approach has evolved. The motivation behind the study of metaphor has progressed beyond simply an interest in literary style. The philosopher, rhetorician, linguist, and psychiatrist each look to the other for their respective contributions.

- (2) Metaphor is dealt with as a conscious and preconscious phenomenon in most instances.

- (3) The comparison and interaction views reflect an increasing emphasis on the importance of the vehicle.

- (4) The colloquial usage of metaphor has become a legitimate realm of study.

### Method

An interest in the subject of metaphor developed in the process of listening to the tape recordings of psychotherapeutic interviews. The impression developed that a person's selection of metaphor was in some way related to his unique unconscious processes. This impression was pursued in the following manner.

The metaphorical expressions of three patients are studied in this paper. A metaphor used by each patient was taken from a tape recorded interview. The first metaphor was used by a patient who had been in weekly psychotherapy with the author for one year. The second and third metaphors were taken from the tape recordings of two initial diagnostic interviews. These interviews were conducted by persons who were not involved in the study. This step was initiated to minimize the complicating influence of transference and countertransference phenomena. All tape recordings were reviewed by the author who selected a metaphor from each.

Two considerations were involved in this selection. First, an attempt was made to select a metaphor which was idiosyn-

cratic, i.e. one which seemed to have a significance to the patient unshared with others. This could include a standard metaphor used in a way as to indicate a particular significance to the individual. Any metaphor whose usage seemed to reflect the patient's identification with a particular subculture was avoided. Second, a word which was a metaphor by virtue of its etymology alone was not chosen (e.g. the word "conception" which can refer to both the power of the mind to form ideas and the process of becoming pregnant).

The author is aware of the difficulty in many cases in deciding what is metaphorical and what is not. Only those examples in which there is little question of the metaphorical function of the expression are considered. The existence of borderline cases does not impugn the concept.

Each patient was then asked to return to the clinic for an appointment with the author. At this time the patient was asked to free associate to the metaphor. This material was also tape recorded. The results of this approach will be presented.

A final approach involved the use of the phenomenon of post hypnotic suggestion. Under hypnosis, a patient was told that in the next waking therapy session she would use a word which referred to a specific unconscious impulse. She was told that the word would appear in a context which would disguise its associative connection with the unconscious impulse. The next waking therapy interview was then tape recorded. The results of this approach will also be presented.

## Results

### I

A 35 year old bank teller complained of guilt laden fantasies of anal intercourse in which he was the passive receptive partner, and uncertainty as to his sexual adequacy. Two years earlier he had experienced a transient paranoid schizophrenic episode which led to his entering psychotherapy. The patient was a passive, compliant individual with a markedly compulsive character structure. He had great difficulty expressing anger to persons in authority.

In a recent tape recorded interview the patient complained:

"It was the first time Bill has gotten on me for something I didn't feel I deserved to be bawled out about." The phrase "gotten on me" is a metaphor. The conscious tenor of this metaphor is "reprimanded me." However, the pictorial image revealed by a concrete interpretation of the vehicle "gotten on me" suggests that Bill is physically mounting the patient. This hints that the unconscious tenor (latent metaphor thoughts) involves the patient's homosexual fantasies.

The patient was then asked to free associate to the phrase "gotten on me." Verbatim excerpts from his associations are as follows:

(1) "The first thing that does come to mind is some sexual connotation. The possibility of someone actually hopping on me — actually having intercourse with me rectally."

(2) "The next thing that comes to mind is the fear I'd experience if such a situation (as anal intercourse) were pending."

(3) "One time improper advances were made by a teacher. He took my pants down and started feeling my fan-ny." (in place of punishing the patient).

(4) "— the beating I used to get as a child. I mean when my father would take the stick to me, or my mother. The stick itself may have some phallic connotation."

(5) "The next thing that pops into my mind is the subject of the enemas — how I always had such a distaste for them — had a sense of shame — (mother) had this feeling of distaste towards anything associated with the bodily functions and most especially the bowel."

(6) "I've been bothered by attractions not only to men but also to women lately — makes me feel very uncomfortable. I'll do anything (to put myself at ease), like pull out a cigarette. Maybe the cigarettes themselves have some phallic connotation."

(7) "I wish I could just bawl like a kid. I don't use

the word cry because it is a little effeminate. I always had that same feeling with the word breast."

(8) "That was always among my favorite fantasies — an intense desire to be held close to a woman. With my head close to her."

The metaphor "gotten on me" might now be understood as follows:

(1) Conscious tenor (literal meaning) - "he reprimanded me."

(2) Preconscious vehicle (concrete meaning of the figurative expression) - "he mounted me physically."

(3) Unconscious tenor (latent metaphor thoughts) -  
 (a) Regression to a passive receptive orientation (anal intercourse, spankings, enemas, etc.) as a means of relating to threatening authority figures. (b) Projection of the patient's guilt provoking homosexual impulse ("Bill has gotten on me"). (c) A masochistic gratification from attacks upon his rectum. (d) An avoidance of his own phallic aggression by his passive feminine orientation.

In the interview the patient used a total of 45 metaphorical expressions. Metaphors involving physical mobility accounted for 33 of the 45 (e.g. "getting off to a start"). Words which sometimes have a sexual connotation such as (a) on and off, (b) up and down, and (c) in and out were present in 18 of the 45 expressions.

## II

The patient was a middle aged woman who came to the psychiatric clinic because of chronic marital problems. Her husband was receiving psychotherapy in the clinic because of recurrent bouts of diarrhea associated with difficulty in controlling hostile impulses. She began the initial interview by describing her husband's frequent outbursts of anger as follows:

" — he gets upset, usually way in the middle of the night. And he sails into me and takes it out on me."

"He sails into me and takes it out on me" is a combination of two metaphorical expressions. They suggested the

prediction that the patient was unconsciously communicating her concern about sexual intercourse with her husband. It was also predicted that the metaphors revealed a masochistic interpretation of sexual intercourse as an aggressive attack. These predictions were made after hearing the opening comments of the tape recorded interview. This and the following example are especially valuable in that nothing was known about the patients which could bias the predictions.

After the author listened to the tape recording of the diagnostic interview the patient was asked to return to the clinic for an appointment with the author. At that time she was asked to free associate to the metaphors "he sails into me and takes it out on me." Her associations began with an expression of feelings of inadequacy in meeting her husband's "needs" (at first she did not specify what these needs were). The patient then recalled her recurring tendency to refer to her husband as her father (while free associating she made this slip of the tongue twice). With considerable anxiety the patient next mentioned her sexual relationship with her husband. She observed "I believe, possibly, that this is THE thing," and continued "if I'm able to give myself to him, and we have a satisfactory relationship there's none of this." At intervals the patient would cry as she described how her husband's sexual advances annoyed her. With a shaky voice she recalled "I've been mistreated (sexually) by men, I haven't been able to defend myself." The patient expressed her fear of the husband "sailing into me" when she said "sometimes I wondered if I was going to get killed in the middle of the night."

Finally the patient was asked to associate to "and takes it out on me." First she described her husband awakening at night with bouts of diarrhea. The husband would angrily contend that the diarrhea was caused by his wife's failure to satisfy his sexual needs. With considerable guilt and crying the patient then recalled the husband's demand that she participate in mutual oral-genital intercourse. She expressed fears that this practice would result in her catching a venereal

disease. She also worried that her husband's desires might be "abnormal."

The metaphor can now be restated as follows:

(1) Conscious tenor - "He reprimands me and blames me for something for which I am not responsible."

(2) Preconscious vehicle - "He sails into me and takes it out on me."

(3) Unconscious tenor - (a) Fusion of the concepts of aggression and sexuality. (b) Denial of guilt provoking incestuous wishes by projection (he sails into me). (c) Rejection of guilt provoking impulses to enjoy fellatio and cunnilingus. (d) Masochistic reception of husband's hostile outbursts (he "takes it out on me" - "he defecates on me" ? ?)

This patient used 47 metaphorical expressions in the diagnostic interview. The majority of these seemed to relate to the patient's sexual problems. Verbatim examples include (1) "we never fit in," (2) "get ourselves straightened out," (3) "many things that were hard for me," (4) "the final clincher," (5) "wouldn't be able to make it," (6) "he has what I would call a fit in the middle of the night," (7) "I don't know what comes over me," (8) "I can't reach him," (9) "I don't want to make you miserable, let's cut it out," (10) "it becomes harder for me," etc.

### III

The patient was a 20 year old unmarried Negro woman who experienced recurrent bouts of anxiety. In the diagnostic interview she repeated the metaphor "come over me" five times.

(1) 14 seconds. "A feeling would come over me and I felt that I was falling out."

(2) 31 seconds. "At times these emotions would come over me."

(3) 34 seconds. "They would just come over me."

(4) 11 minutes 13 seconds. "This very tense feeling came over me. It seemed as if people were drifting and everything became double with size. I couldn't control myself."

(5) 11 minutes 30 seconds. "It seemed as if that feel-

ing just came over me. I was very tense and restless and had to keep moving."

The metaphor "come over me" seemed to have special significance to the patient. Thus it was used three times in the first minute of the diagnostic interview. At this point the prediction was recorded that "come over me" was an unconscious communication of the patient's concern with sexual intercourse - (thus, "come over me" = "ejaculate on top of me"). It was also predicted that "come over me" referred to the patient's feeling of being held down or smothered by inhibitions, parental attachments, etc.

In the next interview the patient was asked to free associate to "come over me." Her first statement was, "I felt as if something had been cast on my head and just went down over my body." She further observed, "I seem to stand off from my surroundings sometimes. Seems like I'm distant from them - or different - or what not." The patient next feared that her friends would belittle her and then referred to her mother and youngest sister. She stressed a feeling of hopelessness in regard to being helped with her problems. A verbatim excerpt from her associations is as follows:

"Now when I think of it, it seems as if when I tried before to describe this condition to anyone I would always use the words 'come over me', and it seems that at the time I was very hesitant about whether to use it or not."

"Also, it seems when I use the words 'come over me' I imagine myself, my own image, and I think of my head."

"I also think of something that can't be touched."

"Always too I think of something that starts from my head and comes down."

"And I think of the morning I was going to work and the place where I was." (The patient then described how her symptoms first began when she walked by a group of men whom she thought had sexual feelings towards her.)

"Then too it seems as if a blackness comes to my mind. I feel afraid to be free. It seems like the word 'comes' seems as if I just reach out and pull something over my head and bring it down."



Next the patient was asked to draw "come over me". Without questioning this request she drew the following:

Drawing One



(1)



(2)



(3)

She said of each:

- (1) "It's like a cast. Like I'm within somethin."
- (2) "It's a ball of blackness I picture in my mind."
- (3) "It's like someone poured something over me - over my head." (sperm over her maidenhead ??)

The metaphor "come over me" can now be understood as follows:

- (1) Conscious tenor. "occur"
- (2) Preconscious vehicle. "come over me"
- (3) Unconscious tenor. (a) Expression of the patient's feeling of isolation from her surroundings. Thus, she feels separated from others by a cast which envelopes her body. (b) Inferiority feelings which stem from her belonging to the Negro race are present. The inferior position which she associates with black skin is perhaps expressed by something coming *over* her. Also, her black skin may be the cast which covers her body. (c) Concern with sexual intercourse is communicated. Thus a man is on top of ("comes over") a woman in coitus. The word "come" interpreted colloquially could refer to ejaculation as suggested by the patient's third drawing. The patient's associations reveal that her symptoms first "came over me" at a time when she was preoccupied with sexual thoughts. Displacement from maidenhead to head is suggested both in the associations and drawings. (d) The patient's feelings of hopelessness are perhaps communicated by the reversal of "overcome" to "come over". (e) The associations hint that sibling rivalry problems are also expressed (other children "come over" the patient).

A subsequent review of the diagnostic material revealed that the patient had a marked oedipal problem. She defended against her sexual impulses by widespread repression and withdrawal from social contacts. Problems secondary to sibling rivalry and her feeling about being a Negro were in evidence.

This example illustrates a common phenomenon observed during this study. Metaphors which seemed to have a special significance to the patient were commonly repeated several

times in the course of one interview with the patient.

#### IV

The hypothesis that the tenor of a metaphor may be unconscious was then tested by use of post-hypnotic suggestion. During a somnambulistic trance a 34 year old woman was told that she would use the words "lay" or "laid" several times in the next waking interview. It was suggested that her use of "lay" and "laid" would stem from their association to sexual intercourse. She was then told that she would not be aware of the linkage between laid and sexuality at the time of her use of the term. Five days later the next waking interview was held. The following are three excerpts from this interview:

(1) Pt. "I *lay* around and think how things used to be but isn't anymore. I haven't rested too well the past couple of nights. I just toss and turn. I got sleepy once yesterday afternoon. I *laid* down but I didn't go to sleep."

Prior to these statements the patient had been talking about the failure of her marriage because her husband had sexual relations with other women.

(2) Pt. "A lot of times I'd get off from work and he'd be drunk. I'd *lay* awake for the longest time and couldn't go to sleep. Wonder how I got myself tangled up with somebody like that?"

The patient had been telling how there were times when she wanted sexual relations with her husband and he'd be too worn out because of his sexual behavior with other women.

(3) Pt. "I feel just the same way as I feel when I *lay* down something and can't think where I put it."

This comment followed a lengthy silence during which the patient appeared anxious. It was in response to my suggesting a relationship between her masochism and guilt stemming from sexual impulses.

The following week the patient was again hypnotized. An excerpt from this interview is as follows:

Ther. "Mrs. M., do you recall what we talked about last week?"

Pt. "We talked about sexual relationships."

Ther. "What did we say about this?"

Pt. "I used the word laid."

Ther. "What was it that you said?"

Pt. "I said 'lay around and think.'"

Ther. "And what else?"

Pt. "And think about when I used to be married and sometimes when I used to be with my husband, and sometimes have a sexual relationship."

Ther. "What other ways did you use the words 'lay' and 'laid'?"

Pt. "I said sometimes when I had sexual relations with my husband I wondered how he'd feel to come and get in bed with me when he had been laying around with other women."

Ther. "When you said, 'I'd lay awake for the longest time' what did you mean by the word 'lay'?"

Pt. "Just meant I'd stay awake and I'd want him but he didn't want to be bothered."

Ther. "Why didn't you say 'I'd be awake'?"

Pt. "I don't know. I guess I used the word meaning no particular thing. Could be taken more than one way."

Ther. "More than one way? In what way?"

Pt. "Could've meant I just laid down. Some persons use the word laid in place of sexual relations. Maybe that isn't the right way to use it!"

### Discussion

In this paper metaphor is defined as a figure of speech in which a word or phrase expresses coexistent thoughts which are associatively connected, at least one of which may be unconscious and therefore less apparent. It is believed that unconscious impulses continually strive for conscious expression. Phenomena indicating that these strivings have met with a degree of success include dreams, parapraxes, neurotic symptoms, delusions, and hallucinations. In each instance there is a compromise formation between the forces of the unconscious and the defense mechanisms of the ego. It

is reasonable to hypothesize that metaphor shares this common feature. Metaphors, dreams, and parapraxes would then be comparable phenomena. Each would be seen to result from a similar compromise formation.

Confirmation of the importance of unconscious forces may stem from a search for features of primary process thinking in metaphor. Let us consider the characteristics of primary process thinking individually:

(1) Representation by Analogy. The importance of analogy in metaphor has long been recognized. Aristotle's original definition of metaphor emphasized the importance of analogy. In addition, the presentation of an underlying analogy formed the basis for the comparison view.

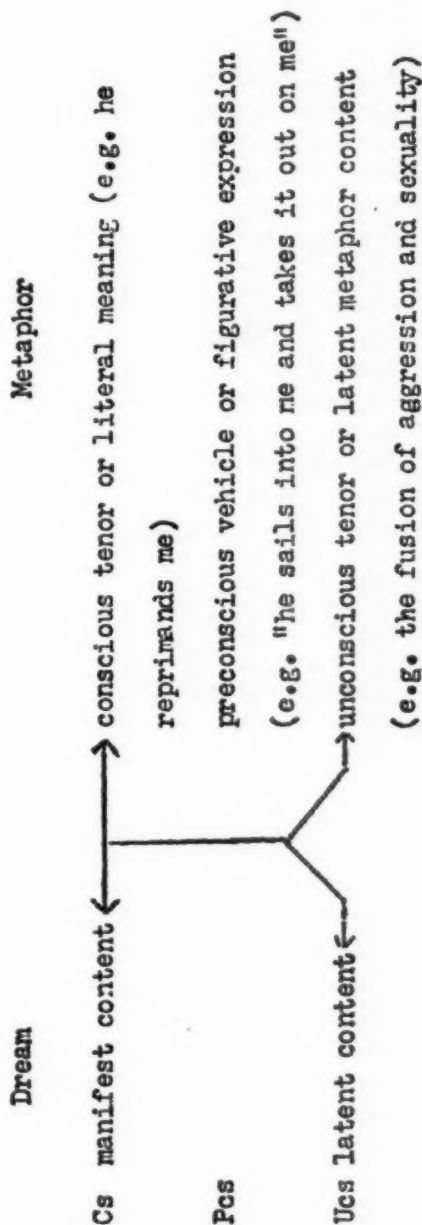
(2) Displacement. Freud (7) observed that in dreams there is "a transference and displacement of psychical intensities" from the latent content to the manifest content. In metaphor there seems to be a displacement of psychical intensity from the unconscious tenor to the conscious tenor. This comparison can be shown as follows:

The metaphor "He sails into me and takes it out on me" can serve as an example. Observe that the affectively charged component is the conscious tenor, i.e. the idea of another person reprimanding the patient. It may be that the displacement of psychical intensity to the conscious tenor serves to focus attention on the conscious tenor. This could be one reason, among others, why the literal meaning is the component of metaphor which is consciously perceived.

The vehicle of a metaphor is preconscious. This can be confirmed by noting that the concrete meaning of the vehicle, "He sails into me and takes it out on me" is accessible to, but not in, awareness. The pictorial image suggested by a concrete interpretation of the vehicle does not seem to have been the recipient of the displaced psychical intensity.

(3) Symbolic Representation. In his paper on symbolism Jones (8) contrasted symbol and metaphor. He described symbol and metaphor as sub-categories of indirect representation. A basic difference is that metaphor is a usage of language whereas a true symbol is not. It is likely that a symbol

Chart One



may be a constituent of metaphor just as a symbol may appear in dreams.

(4) Condensation. The phrase "He sails into me and takes it out on me" condenses (a) a fusion of the concepts of aggression and sexuality, (b) a denial of guilt provoking incestuous wishes by projection, and (c) a rejection of guilt provoking impulses to enjoy fellatio and cunnilingus.

(5) Preverbal Representation. Cicero's (5) thesis on metaphor emphasized the appeal of metaphor to the senses. This feature of primary process thinking may be responsible for the traditional emphasis on ornamentation as the chief function of metaphor.

In the evolution of thought about metaphor the vehicle has gained increasing recognition. It is no longer viewed as merely a decorative means of expressing the tenor. The argument of this paper attributes a unique function to the vehicle of a metaphor. It suggests that a concrete interpretation of the vehicle may provide a hint as to the content of the latent metaphor thoughts (e.g., "He sails into me" suggests "He places his penis in me"). But how is it that unconscious material can achieve so direct an expression? The answer may be that our attention is focused on the conscious tenor rather than the vehicle. Since the concrete meaning of the vehicle receives no direct attention, unconscious material is free to seek fairly direct expression. It is almost as if the vehicle functions as an associational linkage between the conscious tenor and unconscious tenor. This speculation could have considerable practical value. Metaphor is used frequently and spontaneously throughout each therapy hour. Therefore it provides a continuing access to unconscious material. This is in contrast to dreams and earliest memories which usually must be requested and parapraxes which may be infrequent.

The origin of the affective experience as a constituent of metaphor remains uncertain. It is common to emphasize the pleasure issuing from metaphor. Thus, many contend that its chief function is one of ornamentation. Actually, the gamut of affects find expression in metaphor. The expression



of unconscious impulses by metaphor could explain this wide spectrum of affects. For example, the relief of tension associated with an ungratified drive may result in the affect of pleasure. Conversely, the release of forbidden unconscious urges may produce affects such as guilt and anxiety. Also the displacement of psychical intensity from the latent metaphor thoughts to the conscious tenor could contribute to the affective experience. Another possible origin of pleasure would involve the temporary regression to a more primitive level of functioning. Metaphor would then be grouped with games and humor which are thought to be regressive phenomena.

The observations of this study touch upon the more general problem of specificity of verbal selection. The evidence suggests that word preference is influenced by the unconscious associations to the word in question. This may be a partial explanation why one metaphor is chosen in preference to another when both would seem to convey the intended meaning.

### Conclusions

This paper has endeavored to delineate the psychiatrist's contribution to an understanding of metaphor theory. A fuller comprehension of the dynamics of metaphorical expressions should enhance the psychiatrist's understanding of his patient's attempts to communicate.

The clinical observations suggest the following hypotheses:

- (1) It is most productive to study metaphor in relation to its author. The study of metaphor as an isolated entity is less fruitful.

- (2) Metaphor is a phenomenon comparable to dreams and parapraxes. Each derives from a compromise formation between the forces of the unconscious and the defense mechanisms of the ego.

- (3) Metaphor can be conceptually sub-divided into (a) conscious tenor, (b) pre-conscious vehicle, and (c) unconscious tenor.

(4) The vehicle of a metaphor may be expressed in the language of the primary process. A concrete interpretation of the vehicle may provide a hint as to the content of the unconscious tenor. Therefore, close attention to the metaphorical expressions which a patient uses might become a means of keeping one's finger on the pulse of the patient's unconscious.

(5) As in the case of dreams, the mechanisms of metaphor-work seem to include condensation, displacement, etc. A displacement of psychical intensity from the unconscious tenor to the conscious tenor may be one factor, among others, which brings the conscious tenor to our focus of attention. This might explain our tendency to disregard the concrete meaning of the vehicle which, in turn, enables the embodiment of unconscious thoughts in the vehicle.

(6) A metaphor can have more than one tenor. There is most often an unconscious tenor.

(7) The affective experience associated with the use of metaphor seems to arise from: (a) the expression of unconscious impulses, (b) the displacement of psychical intensity from unconscious tenor to conscious tenor, and (c) the temporary regression to a more primitive mode of communication.

(8) Unconscious impulses significantly influence word preference. This may be a partial explanation of why a person chooses one metaphor in preference to another when it would seem that both convey the intended meaning.

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# Bibliotherapy: An Application of Psychoanalytic Theory

by

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Through the centuries the philosopher, the critic, and the artist have attributed to the imaginative writer not only intuitive understanding of man's motives and his nature but also power to influence his thinking, to move his heart, and even to alter his behavior. More recently psychiatrists and psychologists have acknowledged that the novelist and playwright have plumbed the deep reaches of man's nature and often anticipated the discoveries of science. Bibliotherapy, drawing upon the insights of both artist and scientist, is grounded in the theory that there is an integral relationship between the dynamics of the personality and the nature of vicarious experience. It is a process of interaction between the personality of the reader and imaginative literature which may engage his emotions and free them for conscious and productive use. (19)

Techniques used to establish contact with patients who are partially or completely out of touch with reality have implications for the practice of bibliotherapy. By entering into the fantasies of patients whose worlds are populated with magical figures, exponents of direct analysis have been able to proceed in their treatment, even of schizophrenics, with favorable results (6, 7, 11, 13). In the treatment of those who have less severe behavior disorders it is a no less crucial problem to establish and maintain contact which will result in amelioration of the patient's condition. The common denominator for successful therapy, regardless of the severity of the illness or the orientation of the therapist, is the capacity

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to communicate with the patient, to enter empathically his symbolic world, and to establish a relationship which will restore him to himself (6, 7, 11, 13, 14). These goals may be facilitated by the use of bibliotherapy with those patients who can be enjoined to read. The insight that might follow when the patient's fantasies are acted out by the therapist may also be achieved when the patient shares the same psychological world with a character in fiction or drama. Identification with fictional characters forces the reader into a dual role; as participant in the action of the novel he will express latent affect when feelings of sympathy or hostility are evoked; as spectator he will critically appraise the character's fantasies, anxieties, or fears. This simultaneous involvement and detachment, characteristic of vicarious experience, serves as a catalyst to extend the range of his consciousness and to set his energy free.

The numerous discussions of the use of literature as an adjunct to psychotherapy (1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20) have been largely anecdotal or descriptive. In our analysis of bibliotherapy we shall suggest its general application to psychoanalytic theory and its specific application to direct analysis.

Let us first review the principles underlying direct analysis and suggest how they lend theoretical support to the practice of bibliotherapy. Grotjahn describes his efforts to communicate with the patient at his own level by acting out his fantasies and inviting him to assume the therapist's role. It is his conviction that the therapist, in treating children and psychotics, must speak their language and dream their dreams. By this means he may establish communication with them and actively create the proper transference situation (6, 7).

Rosen's direct analysis has been described as the uninhibited interpretation of the patient's unconscious productions and symptomatic acts. Like Grotjahn he joins the patient on the level of his psychosis and enters into his psychotic world which is peopled with magical figures. These the patient projects onto the therapist, who tries to convert them into benevolent and protecting ones. The transference that

is thereby established becomes the bridge to reality (6, 13).

Lindner graphically describes in *The Jet-Propelled Couch* his endeavor to pry his patient loose from his psychosis without destroying the partial hold he had on reality. In a flash of insight, or, as he implies, out of his own need, he recalled the work of Rosen and others and entered into his patient's elaborate fantasies. His participation shook his patient's delusion but ironically induced a momentary self delusion. He explains his patient's recovery in his conclusion that psychological structures may be rigidly circumscribed as to living space. When another person invades a delusion, the original occupant is literally forced to move out (11). He paraphrases Rosen to this effect:

. . . When the therapist engages in the same behavior as the patient—and expresses the same ideas in the same language—the patient's own image and activities are projected before him as on a screen. He is thus, in one bold maneuver, thrust to the side of reality, forced to take up a critical position vis-a-vis what he observes, i.e., his own behavior, and compelled to adopt an attitude. This attitude is soon transformed into a therapeutic tool with which the clinician refashions the patient's psychic structure. (11: p. 81)

Certainly Lindner's success in curing the atomic scientist was rewarding; and perhaps as remarkable, his admission of the thin line between patient and therapist was courageous. Nonetheless this was a hazardous undertaking. It has been remarked how exceptional Rosen's work has been in that he suffers no fear of violence from his patients and that he is able to accept his patients' hostility with remarkable equanimity (6). These approaches to therapy provide a paradigm for establishing contact with the patient through the use of another medium less costly to the therapist in energy and control. In his reading of fiction and drama the patient may also confront his own language and dreams as well as the infantile and magical figures that are threatening to him.

If the reader's emotions are engaged when he reads a novel or play, energy that has been serving a repressive function may be liberated for productive use. The reader's re-



sponse, according to Hans Sachs, becomes one of unconsciously deciphering the hieroglyphic symbols of art by means of which his inner world becomes accessible and he enjoys the pleasures of psychic expansion (15). Literature, dealing with man's deepest feelings, dreams, hates, and fears, differs only in degree from the psychological reality in which the patient lives. Thus, paradoxically, it may serve merely as a reflection of his own motives and behavior, or it may reveal to him facets of his own experience that have been cut off from his consciousness. In a world of dynamic equilibrium there is a constant interchange between living beings and their environment (8). A notable example of this interchange is the process of symbolization, whereby the symbol—in this case an episode in a novel or the anguished feelings of a character—becomes interchanged with the reader's actual experience by means of a transfer of affect from the total situation to the symbol of it. A variation of the transference may thus be evoked by the reading of imaginative literature. The nature of the interaction between the reader and the reading matter and the ultimate significance of his experience in terms of reorganization of his psychic structure are the product of a confluence of such factors as his needs, values, goals and characteristic defense systems (10, 19). In addition to these factors the affective properties of imaginative literature must be taken into consideration.

Parallel in substance and function to the primary phases of psychotherapy, the vicarious experience induced by reading involves identification, including projection and introjection, catharsis, and insight. These manifestations assume a variety of forms precipitated by the reader's 'shock of recognition' when he beholds himself or someone close to him. Self recognition may give him a sense of belonging; it may augment his self regard and allay his sense of guilt. The character's troubles may arouse feelings of sympathy and compassion. Or the reader may displace hostility upon the character because he cannot tolerate in himself what he recognizes in the character. A situation in a story may be so compelling that it becomes interchanged in his mind with an

episode in his own life and becomes endowed with the affective character of the latter. The change in cognitive and psychic force which may result from vicarious experience may lead to adaptive behavior that is more realistic than the reader's previous adjustment, or the reading may merely reflect the interpreter's existing means of coping, such as repression, rationalization, or projection. In any case the patient who might be unable to talk directly about his own feelings and experience may reveal them indirectly when talking about fictional characters. Interpretations that the therapist might not risk giving directly to the patient may be given with impunity concerning the meaning of situations portrayed in imaginative literature.

When the reader is given an opportunity to interact symbolically with fictional characters, he is reacting to real people and real situations. The life he endows upon them is the life he brings to them. Freud describes the power of the imaginative artist to order the judgment of the reader and redirect his emotions:

. . . We react to his inventions as we should have reacted to real experiences; by the time we have seen through his trick it is already too late and the author has achieved his object . . . The story teller has a peculiarly directive influence over us; by means of the states of mind into which he can put us and the expectations he can arouse in us, he is able to guide the current of our emotions, dam it up in one direction and make it flow in another, and he often obtains a great variety of effects from the same material . . . (3: pp. 405-06)

The illustrations that follow bear out this testimony. They are not, it is true, the responses of patients undergoing analysis but the reactions of college students to the books they have read. However, the dynamic processes engendered by vicarious experience in the normally troubled student found on any campus and in the deeply disturbed mental patient vary only in degree. Parallel in function to the acting out by the therapist of the patient's fantasies is the shared psychological reality that fiction can provide.

An eighteen year old boy who had never before experienced any sense of personal involvement in his reading confronts himself in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. His comment betrays both his shock of discovery and his implied distaste:

The stories gave me a frightened doubt that I myself was being portrayed in an exaggerated fashion.

In addition to holding up a mirror to the personality literature also forces recognition of figures in the reader's life who are threatening to him. Just as the therapist endeavors to convert the frightening figures into benevolent ones, fiction affords the reader an opportunity to project feelings of fear and anger onto imaginary people with similar results. In the quotation that follows a mildly disturbed adolescent girl identifies with Ernest in *The Way of All Flesh*:

I got real angry with Christina for making Ernest so miserable, and then I wondered why; it didn't seem as if a mere book character could make me so mad. Then I decided it was not Christina at all that made me so angry. It was the situation at home. I never admitted before I resented my mother. She has been so good to my sister and she works so hard to keep the family together. But Christina meant well too and look what she did to Ernest. I decided it was a natural feeling for me to want to live alone at my age. Mother can't help how she feels and she is too old to change. But I am too old to submit to dictation and I have a right to live my own life. I can respect mother for what she is, but I can still see that she is not always right.

Her identification of Ernest's mother with her own mother enables her to project her anger onto Christina. But having spent her anger in catharsis, she is able to utilize her critical faculties and discriminate between the two mothers and evaluate her own situation. In so doing the threatening figure of her childhood is reduced to life size and endowed with a reasonable share of human frailty.

In some cases the identification is sufficiently strong to take the reader back in time and place to his own childhood.

A middle aged teacher, on reading *Sons and Lovers*, first reported that she found it beautiful:

I spent more time in thinking about it than in the actual reading. It aroused many memories of my early life. They came to me in the middle of the night, in the street car. Memories of my mother, of her death, of her punishment of me, of my brother's scorn of me.

Later she commented on not being able to bear reading the book and gave this reason:

I never loved my mother. That is a dreadful thing to say, a dreadful thing to live through. I was happier when I was away from her. When I came home I was apt to be cross, sensitive, and unpleasant. My mother's spells of blues depressed me. Also she dominated me. I was ashamed of my attitude toward her so I never admitted it . . . I was entirely too docile all my life, even submissive. That's why I hated the book even while I thought it beautiful. It made me see how many years of misery I caused myself. I didn't like to admit I was so submissive. Also I didn't like to see my mother as she really was. Since her death I have idolized her. But now I know she wasn't mean like the mother in the book, nor spying and hypocritical. But she was efficient, too busy, ambitious, and brought up to believe in children's explicit obedience. I should wipe from my mind both the picture of a perfect mother and the lingering resentment toward her.

Another student reacted with strong emotion to *The Little Locksmith*:

I raged at the author for leaving the book in the unfinished manner she chose. She left the van load of furniture—her mother's—dumped helter skelter in an empty house. It left me angry, frustrated. Her callousness enraged me. Why did it matter to me? Why did I get so emotional about it? I know why it hurt with an almost physical hurt. I, too, had broken up a home. I never reassembled that one nor made another. I have put down no roots. I am afraid of having them torn out again. Nearly twenty years later I read of a similar incident—and felt unreasoning anger.

The insight in both of these cases takes the form of recognition of their projections, followed by a comparative evalua-

tion of the situation in the book and the situation in their lives. In the first instance, the reader's sympathy for Paul was sufficiently strong to dissolve her guilt and to uproot her hitherto repressed feelings about her mother. Furthermore, in giving expression to her emotions as well as her reason, she was able to view her relationship with her mother in a fresh perspective. In so doing she was freed from the ambivalence that had tormented her and was emotionally ready to make the healthy resolution: "I should wipe from my mind both the picture of a perfect mother and the lingering resentment toward her." Similarly in the second instance the early rage, on being re-experienced in a new situation, becomes conscious. The re-living of past experience compels her to re-examine the past and re-evaluate the present.

We have submitted the theory that the use of imaginative literature may produce results similar to those effected by direct analysis. When the therapist acts out the patient's fantasies, in Rosen's words, his own image and activities are projected before him as on a screen. Similarly the artist's productions hold 'the mirror up to nature'. They 'show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image'. In this refracted view of the self or others, the reader is compelled to express an attitude, for he cannot remain neutral in the presence of human beings in action. In his concomitant exercise of feeling and of judgment he may find a bridge to reality.

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# The Don Juan Myth

by

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Literary or mythological libertinage in Europe is as old as Homer, but it remained for an Andalusian monk named Gabriel Tellez, writing under the pseudonym of Tirso de Molina, to create the moral drama which crystallized the myth of Don Juan, "the libertine damned." His work, entitled *The Mockers (Burlador) of Seville and the Stone Guest*, appeared at the beginning of the 17th Century.

Essentially, the legend as told by Tirso and as elaborated in the many later versions, is the story of a gallant who relies on violence and sardonic trickery - he is first and last the "mockers" - to seduce his numerous victims. Only four seductions are described in Tirso's play, but the most significant feature in each case is that Don Juan achieves his purpose by assuming the identity of a lover or prospective bridegroom, - even posing as his bosom friend, the Marques de la Mota, in an unscrupulous attempt on the latter's beloved.

Now this nuptial or pre-nuptial substitution has a very ancient mythical and ritual background, and it is probable that Don Juan is a latter-day representative of this substitution. In the original myths, the substitute was a hero or god. Thus, Zeus disguised himself as a mortal, Amphitryon, in order to seduce the latter's wife, Alcmene. Later, the gods were ritually represented by priests or kings. The Pharaoh disguised himself as the god Ammon when preparing to enter the nuptial chamber. Women were ritually impregnated by priests in the temples of the Ancient Middle East, and in India the Brahmins had the first-night privileges. Briffault writes: "In some forms of the usage, pre-nuptial prostitution is limited to strangers. The unknown stranger is, in fact, in popular tradition, a common disguise of the god." For this reason, the Esquimaux used gladly to allow strangers to sleep with

their wives. In fact, most primitive people believe that conception cannot occur without fertilization by a god, usually a moon-god, and thus it is "imperative for every woman, apart from any earthly marriage, to achieve union with the divine source of generative powers". (1) If Don Juan is indeed the descendant of these divine fertilizers, he has many of the earmarks of a god-like being, including superhuman physical prowess and perpetual youth. Otto Rank has explored this hypothesis very convincingly, and the reader is referred to his writings on the subject. (2, 3) Rank, incidentally, suggests that the advantages of divine paternity were reinforced by the belief that through temporarily abdicating his marital rights the husband avoided loss of his soul to his progeny. Freud sees in the practice a desire to escape the hostility engendered in the woman at the loss of virginity. (4)

As Christianity developed, the rite of divine fertilization was absorbed by the Church. Baptism and confirmation spiritually fortified the soul without the sexual intervention of a human representative of the god, and, in time, these sexual aspects became vestigial or perverted to other ends. The payment known as *jus primae noctis*, made by the bridegroom to liege-lord or priest, was probably in lieu of actual fecundation by these personages. Actual performance of the ritual sexual act, the *droit de seigneur*, must have been very rare during the Middle Ages, since genuine records of it are practically non-existent.\* Only those individuals (mostly rural folk) who maintained the pre-Christian observances of the "Old Religion", continued to submit to the sexual embraces of one whom they believed to be the god in disguise: namely, the "Horned God" who coupled with his worshippers (called by their enemies "witches") at their Sabbaths. (6)

To the church, the God of the Witches was simply the

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\*One authentic Spanish text, however, is known, dated 1406, in which Ferdinand the Catholic forbids "certain Catalan lords" to sleep with the brides of their vassals on their wedding night. (5)

Devil, and it is probable that some similar image of diabolic sexuality was also in the mind of Brother Tellez when he created Don Juan. (In this connection, one wonders about the significance of the Italian tradition that Tellez sold his soul to the Devil in order to win fame under the name of Tirso de Molina!) Rank states that "Don Juan clearly displays the characteristic signs of the Devil", and adds, "The fact that the Devil has always been considered the sexual tempter of women was what probably impelled a few rare authors, Barbey d'Aurevilly, for example, directly to identify Don Juan with the Devil. It is rather surprising that such an idea, which is deeply rooted in the subject of Don Juan, appeared only in the romantic epoch of the 19th Century".

(7)

One of the traits of Don Juan which has a characteristic diabolic flavor is his mockery. Each new seduction to him is the greatest joke or trick yet. Now, sacred things turned inside out often appear as jest and ribaldry, like the medieval Feast of Fools which, on one day a year, made mock of the sacraments. Similarly, the sacred rites of an earlier time became the Carnival of a later age; thus the impulse which motivated the original ritual still finds an outlet, but only in a disguised and burlesqued fashion. Don Juan, likewise a vestige of discredited divinity, is aptly named the "Burlador".

In summary, then, what is the relation of this first part of the Don Juan legend to myth and ritual? A myth is "nothing but a form of words associated with the rite (8)"; if the story of Don Juan is the myth, then the rite is that of divine fertilization by the god in disguise, or, as we would say, by a man representing the god. Usually the myth has the purpose of sanctifying and standardizing the ritual. The peculiarity of the Don Juan myth is that it was first given its modern form at a time when the ritual to which it referred was officially condemned, and was observed only in the secret ceremonials of the witch-cult or in the clandestine sexual lives of women who preferred the embraces of a Don Juan to those of their husbands. Don Juan's women, writes Pérez

de Ayala, fall in love with him "not slowly through Stendhal's process of crystallization, but by a *coup de foudre*, as if sudden grace had descended on them. This, however, is not the grace of the Holy Ghost; it is the grace of Satan. Don Juan is a diabolic agent; just as the Devil is the greatest seducer metaphysically, Don Juan is the greatest physical seducer". (9)

## II

Tirso's play is subtitled "The Stone Guest". Don Juan's mocking dinner invitation to the statue of the man he has killed, the latter's return invitation to a banquet in the chapel, and Juan's final destruction in hell-fire through the agency of the man of stone, are mythical themes with a ritual background entirely different from that which we have described for the first part of the legend.

In a general way, the theme of divine punishment of the hero for *hubris* is connected with the ancient hero myths. As Raglan has shown, a similar fate befalls many mythical heroes, from cultures as diverse as the Greek, Hebrew, Javanese and Celtic: after a period of success, the hero loses favor with gods and men and meets with a mysterious and often fiery death. (8)

However, the stone guest episode is also connected with many ancient myths of the avenging dead, the skeleton at the feast, and the devouring tomb (e.g., *sarcophagus* - "eating flesh") (3) Pritchett makes this interesting comment: "In some parts of Spain, right up to the 18th Century, the peasants used to go to the churches on All Souls' Night to make prayers and offerings for the dead. As it was a feast day, they would often take their glasses of wine there and very soon were raising their glasses to the departed and inviting them mockingly to eat or drink. As in modern Mexico, the dead spirits were placated and kept off by comedy and mockery". (10)

This may be another example of the burlesquing of a once sacred ritual, a practice which has already been mentioned in connection with the degrading of the divine fertili-

zation theme. Be that as it may, the ceremony of inviting the dead to supper is still annually commemorated in many Spanish cities on All Souls' Eve by the performance of a play — Zorilla's *Don Juan Tenorio*.

This folklore must have influenced the authors of the early European and especially Iberian ballads in which the theme of the stone guest and the double invitation occurs. On Tirso, the influence of the folklore was subconscious; undoubtedly he consciously intended the myth of the avenging statue to reflect the Christian dogma of punishment for impiety and infraction of divine law.

### III

The ritual background of both aspects of the Don Juan myth has now been outlined. As much could have been done for any of the ancient myths. But the myth of Don Juan is a living one. Since its crystallization by Tirso in the early 17th Century, the literature of almost every important country of Europe contains one or more re-tellings of the legend, and it continues to excite the interest of writers and the public up to the present day.\*

Nevertheless, in spite of the ingenious variations of the Don Juans of Molière, Da Ponte-Mozart, Byron, Shaw and other non-Spanish authors, it is in Spain, where the myth first received its definitive form, that it has woven itself most tenaciously into the character of the people. As a Spanish folk hero, only Don Quixote, and perhaps one or two bull-fighters, have achieved a status comparable to that of Don Juan. But of these Don Juan alone has, like the saints, the distinction of a day set aside annually to celebrate his cult, for on All Souls' Eve, as mentioned above, Zorilla's *Don Juan Tenorio* is played in cities all over Spain.

Dr. Marañón has analyzed the legend and suggests that the most essentially Spanish aspects of it are the funereal and

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\*The literary vicissitudes of Don Juan have been traced in Gendarme de Bévotte's monumental work. (11) A briefer review of the same material, bringing it up to date, has been written (in English) by Martin Nozick. (12)

religious elements. The sexual *braggadocio*, antithetical to his conception of the virile and monogamous Spanish male, is, he believes, more in the vein of the sensualist who stalked his prey in Ancient Rome or in the courts of the Italian Renaissance. (13)

On the other hand, it would probably take more than the macabre funereal theme to give the Don Juan myth its Spanish birth and its long lease of life in its native land. A myth is essentially wishful and fantastic, and the fact that the average Spanish male is a monogamous *paterfamilias* may be, psychologically, a reason *for* rather than against the perpetuation of the fantasy of the promiscuous Don Juan, so conspicuously unfettered by marital responsibilities. Leaving aside, then, the funereal part of the legend, as sufficiently explained by the ritual and folklore already discussed, the rest of this paper will explore the sexual aspects of the myth.

We have seen that these owe something also to a ritualistic origin — the concept of divine fertilization — but the perpetuation of the myth long after that ritual fell into disuse shows it to be a fantasy related to existing needs in a sizeable part of Spanish society. These needs are for masculine independence and for free sexual expression: basic impulses which, when frustrated, assume more aggressive and sadistic forms. Thus the Don Juan fantasy is germinated. To claim that this fantasy, with all of its sexual overtones, is compatible with Spanish psychology, is not to say that Spanish countries are currently peopled with many “practicing” Don Juans. Gerald Brenan has a pertinent comment on this, which also throws light on the frustrations which have stimulated juanesque fantasies: “All countries have their special forms of egoism, and the Spanish form is active and militant. But it would be a mistake to suppose from this that there have ever been many Don Juans in Spain. There is an insuperable obstacle to their appearance in the reserve and insusceptibility of Spanish women, who make marriage and children the aim of their lives and put sexual love very low in their scale of values. It is a delusion of northerners that Spain is the country of great passions or of



easy seductions. We invent it to account for the visible hunger of the men, their continual prowling round street corners and barred windows, the devouring stares they turn on any women they see, their obvious obsession all through their lives with the question of sex, their expectation of an Arabian Nights' miracle that may at any moment happen to them, when what one ought to ask is how it is that so many male Spaniards appear to be unsatisfied in their love instincts and why they seem to find their women, except in the capacity of mothers, so disappointing. No, decidedly Spain is, after Greece, the worst country in the world for light love affairs, unless they are to be sought in a class that can be influenced by money, and figures like Don Juan Tenorio have their origin in adolescent day-dreams and belong to the world of the Red Rider and the Master Criminal." (14)

In special circumstances, however, the "acting out" of the fantasy is permitted in real life. Such, for example, is the *guapo*, a personality type found by Kathleen Wolf in a rural area of Puerto Rico. (15) This is a man whose aggressiveness, appearing early in life, has been encouraged by the community. "His is an untamed violence with which one cannot reason, and this violence is usually exercised in a neighborhood other than the one in which he resides." The *guapo*, in fact, becomes a kind of culture hero for his community, a means of fighting disliked groups outside the immediate neighborhood. Wolf does not specifically attribute sexual aggressiveness to the *guapo*, but this is undoubtedly a part of his behavior, since the primary definition of his name is "beau", "lover" (secondary meaning: "brawler", "quarrelsome person"). In a more literate community, it is from the ritualistic behavior of *guapos* that a Don Juan might crystallize.

The *guapo*, as long as his behavior meets the need of his community, is not necessarily neurotic, any more than is the participant in a voodoo ceremony who undergoes a temporary dissociation and exhibits combative and boastful behavior which the other participants welcome as a "possession" by a war-like deity. On the other hand, don juanism as a neu-



rotic manifestation is an individual affair, in which the aggressive masculinity is not an expression of an adult value which is socially condoned, but rather of infantile needs, usually of a passive, dependent, pre-genital kind, which society does not accept in an adult, and which have, therefore, to be expressed in disguised form. Such was the case of a young man from a Spanish culture, whose life was characterized by juanesque attitudes. He reported the following revealing dream, actually derived from the Don Juan legend: "I am going with an older man, K., and some friends to the cemetery, where there is a statue of the Commandant from *Don Juan*. K. gets food from the earth, but he does not offer it to us. But we also get food from the earth, and eat." "Food from the earth" was a highly "over-determined" symbol. It represented the loathsome food of the charnel-house: worms, dirt, etc., which dead people (like the patient's deceased father) "eat". It represented the food, equivalent to parental love, of which the patient was deprived as a child. It represented (through certain associations) the love of K's wife, or of a mother-figure — since K. stood for the father — which K. kept for himself. Instead of challenging K. as a real Don Juan might have done, the patient weakly retreated into a group of his peers and was content to "eat dirt" with them. It is significant that love was represented by this deteriorated symbol, indicating the patient's disgust with it; also, the fact that it was *food* was a clue that he was seeking from women the satisfaction of a more infantile need than sex.

This infantile need for reunion with the mother is the basis of much don juanism as a neurotic expression. Such a man is an "eternal suckling", in Stekel's phrase; emotionally married to the mother-image, his philandering represents a flight from incest or, perhaps, from latent homosexuality. In spite of his sexual exploits, he suffers from 'psychic impotence'. (16) There is nothing essentially Spanish about don juanism, however, and I now return to the Don Juan myth, which, on the contrary, flourishes in Spanish culture.

Some of its manifestations may be summarized here.

There are, first of all, the literary expression of the myth. There is the *guapo*, who in real life acts out, with community approval, the juanesque role. There is the widespread appreciation of *machismo*, the quality of being a "he-man", with its emphasis on the anatomical "proofs" of masculinity (large and well-functioning testicles, physical strength, etc.) Finally there is the bull-fight, in which the matador, wearing skin-tight breeches which emphasize his masculinity, manifests all the attitudes—courage, mockery, ruthlessness, *braggadocio*, physical grace, stamina and swordsmanship—for which Don Juan is admired. In his combat with the bull, the symbol *par excellence* of male sexuality, he alternately plays the role of the female who incites yet sidesteps the sexual onslaught, and the male who destroys a rival and dismembers him. There is a suggestive similarity between the drama of the *corrida de toros* and that of Don Juan. At both of these spectacles one participates, in Pitt-Rivers' phrase, in a "ritual revindication of manliness". To "vindicate" means to maintain or defend against attack. The idea that masculinity, in Spanish cultures, is threatened and has constantly to defend itself goes beyond Brenan's interpretation, above, of masculinity merely frustrated by the sexual indifference of Spanish wives. Yet there is evidence that males in Spanish cultures often do feel undermined in their masculinity by the dominant character of their women-folk. While this may be hard to accept for cultures with a stereotyped reputation for male preeminence, consider this passage from Pritchett: "There is a male assertiveness and roughness to the voices of the women. As they walk by, carrying themselves so well, they are rather a collected, rather severe female race. For all this dominant appearance—and they clearly dominate the men by having their role in life firmly marked out and mixed with the male role very little socially—they have the reputation of being home-ly, innocent and sensual. They are passionate lovers of children: there is marriage and eight children in their eyes. . . . From the man the woman demands not passion but marriage; in the woman, the man sees the future mother, the image of

the mother who has dominated his life so far and who, until the end of her days, will be the ruling figure in his life." (17)

The dynamics of this mother-son relationship are well described, at least for the Mexican family, in a paper by Ramirez and Parres. It is probable that these dynamics are generally true for Spanish cultures, and they throw light on certain aspects of the Don Juan fantasy. These authors note that the particularly close contact between mother and child is broken off at the birth of the next sibling. "The abandonment that the mother inflicts upon the child at (that) moment . . . is the pattern that later on will condition the abandonment of the wife by the husband at the birth of her child. Fearing unconsciously to be abandoned, he anticipates and identifies with the aggressive mother who deserted him. . . The man complains that he is forsaken by the woman, be she mistress or wife, even though statistics and reality prove that it is the other way round.\* He drinks and grieves because of this. . . Much of the identity of the Mexican man comes from the mother. Later he reacts against this. He boasts of great masculinity, intransigent authority and power." (18)

Aggressive masculinity, rivalry with another male for possession of the female, swift abandonment of the latter: these three form the core of the original Don Juan fantasy. The *machismo*, as has been suggested, is primarily a reaction against female dominance or identification. The rivalry can now be related to male sibling rivalry which, as soon as we look for it, is seen so prominently in the family in Spanish cultures. One recalls the adolescents who vigorously exclude from their rough games their younger brothers, on the grounds that they are not sufficiently *machos* (male) (19); the brothers who so jealously guard their sisters against their suitors (sibling figures); the jealous husband who "sees in the hypothetical lover of his wife the sibling who robbed him of the loving care of his mother". (20) While he who

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\* In 25% of 500 Mexico City families studied by Ramirez and Parres, the father had abandoned the home.

dreams of being Don Juan has, like all Spanish males, pledged his honor to defend his sisters' virginity, at the same time he is the son who has been rejected by a woman; he has "lost the lap". Unconsciously, then, he sees his mother, and any woman who has given herself to another, (husband, favored sibling) as a deceiver. She is beyond the pale of his defense. The Don Juan with whom he identifies is he who sexually enjoys the woman-possessed-by-another, with small regard for her wishes and perhaps with positive pleasure in her degradation. Conceiving himself to be intellectually and physically superior to his male rival (a younger brother image), he dreams of outwitting him (cf. the theme of taking the place of the husband or fiance) or, if further obstructed, of crushing him.

The third element of the fantasy is that the women are abandoned: once possessed, they are no longer desirable. This abandonment may be a faint echo of the first-night ritual performed by the divine substitute—by definition, a temporary possession. Chiefly, it is an indication that Don Juan's aim is to replace his rival in the arms of a woman—but not to be detained there for long. Thus the classical Don Juan does not maintain a mistress, because in the connection with a mistress there is also, as in the relationship with the wife and mother for which it substitutes, a certain permanence. Only the preliminaries of the affair, the chase and capture, the ousting of a male rival, are *juanesque*. To linger is to run the risk of being deserted by the woman, and he prefers not to have the lap snatched from him a second time.

#### IV

Tirso's version of the Don Juan myth provides the fantasy material corresponding to certain phases in the life of males of Spanish cultures, namely the periods in childhood when the mother seemed to abandon him in favor of other siblings, and in adulthood when the wife apparently repeated this abandonment in favor of their children.

In another phase the male reacts to this abandonment by a similar rejection, and with a transference of his attach-

ment to a succession of mother substitutes: nurse, bride, mistress. These have, to a greater or lesser degree, the attributes of mothers-without-children, and provide a temporary haven from the rivalry which agitates male existence. The magical security of these relationships reaches its maximum in the courtship-honeymoon period of marriage, and in later extra-marital love affairs. This need for reunion with the beloved is shared as much by women as men, and therefore differs significantly from the masculine need for independence and sexual enjoyment of the woman-possessed-by-another which, as we have seen, germinated the original Don Juan fantasy. In a sense it represents the reentry of woman as an equal protagonist into the myth. Stimulated historically by the influences coming in from Northern Europe with the Romantic Revival, these ideas received expression in José Zorilla's play, *Don Juan Tenorio*, first produced in 1844. While this also incorporates the sexual exploits of the earlier version, its special significance lies in the character of Doña Inez. Inez, abducted from a convent by Don Juan, arouses in him, for the first time, the emotion of love. After many vicissitudes, it is through the love and prayers of Inez that God grants salvation to Juan, and, as the play ends, they sink together onto a bed of flowers to the strains of an angelic choir and celestial music.

Despite the sentimental bathos, the play appeals to many Spanish women, as well as to the type of Spanish male who believes that he has been redeemed from a life of corruption by his mother or wife. To other cultures, this might seem merely a neurotic disguise for a pre-genital reunion with the mother for the "eternal suckling" already mentioned. However, in Spanish cultures the potential neurotic conflict between the demands of the adult world and the infantile desires is often avoided, because the environment (mother, sister, wife or "Mother" Church) connives in these male fantasies of "salvation" - i.e., that a man can be redeemed through association with "pure" woman here below, or through the supernatural mediation of the Blessed Virgin.

The final twist to the ending of the Don Juan myth has

been given in our own day by Miguel de Unamuno. With the growing secularization of society, it is not surprising that neither the denouement of hellfire nor that of angelic choirs seems symbolically apt. Nor is the concept of the idealized, succoring female convincing, except to the relatively unsophisticated. Unamuno's *Two Mothers* (21) is the myth of the Don Juan who grows old because it is no longer possible to believe in his supernatural exitus. A widow "had seized him in her clutches and kept him to an unchanging mode of life. In Don Juan, will had died with desire. Raquel's eyes and her hands lulled and calmed all his appetites." It is an image of the child who finds again the exclusively-possessed mother of infancy; the second childhood of a Don Juan who no longer seeks to displace a rival. It is as if a rival has never existed—"for Raquel seemed to have been born a widow."

In Unamuno's tale, the feebleness of the aging lover is contrasted with the force of Raquel's desire for motherhood. He has one final use: to father a child on another woman, which Raquel promptly claims for herself.

The final statement of the Don Juan myth, then, is that the female will prevail over the male, if for no other reason than that motherhood lasts a long time, but procreation is soon over. In spite of the preeminence enjoyed by Spanish males, in spite of the *guapo*, the bull-fights and the rituals to revindicate manliness, the women with marriage and eight children in their eyes will capture the sons of other women and make them husband, fathers—and sons again. The truth about Don Juan, according to some, is that he is the pursued rather than the pursuer; like Orpheus, he is in danger of being torn in pieces by his women. "And you, Juan," says Raquel, "You, *my child*, are you going to be divided? Or are you going to remain whole for your wife?"

"Juan fled from both of them."

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